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Phil Price

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Waging Peace for Colombia's Youth: Countering the Attack on Education

Abstract

After nearly five decades of internal armed conflict, Colombia's children and education system remain firmly under siege. Boys and girls as young as thirteen are pulled out of classrooms and thrown into battlefields. Teachers routinely disappear and/or are subjected to extrajudicial executions. Guerillas, paramilitaries, and the Colombian army all utilize school buildings as posts for their combatants. School zones have become littered with landmines. Child displacement and poverty have reached epidemic levels. In direct contradiction with the Rome Statute and the Colombian Ministry of Defense Directive 30743, the Colombian government is guilty of war crimes by employing children as spies and informants (Amnesty International 2008). Despite this multifaceted attack, however, dedicated individuals and organizations are working tirelessly to safeguard Colombia's youth by ensuring access to education and implementing innovative curriculum that cultivates a vibrant civil society based on the values of peaceful convivencia.

Keywords

Human rights, Colombia, Children's rights, Child soldiers, Education, Access to education

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Waging Peace for Colombia's Youth: Countering the Attack on Education

By Phil Price

"Education shapes the future. This is even more true in countries up-ended by fighting or disaster, where all sense of normalcy has been lost. Education is the first step towards restoring security and hope."

--Asha Rose-Migiro (United Nations Deputy Secretary-General)

After nearly five decades of internal armed conflict, Colombia's children and education system remain firmly under siege. Boys and girls as young as thirteen are pulled out of classrooms and thrown into battlefields. Teachers routinely disappear and/or are subjected to extrajudicial executions. Guerrillas, paramilitaries, and the Colombian army all utilize school buildings as posts for their combatants. School zones have become littered with landmines. Child displacement and poverty have reached epidemic levels. In direct contradiction with the Rome Statute and the Colombian Ministry of Defense Directive 30743, the Colombian government is guilty of war crimes by employing children as spies and informants (Amnesty International 2008). Despite this multifaceted attack, however, dedicated individuals and organizations are working tirelessly to safeguard Colombia's youth by ensuring access to education and implementing innovative curriculum that cultivates a vibrant civil society based on the values of peaceful *convivencia*.³

This collective effort is creating positive change every day in Colombian schools, and has managed to garner widespread support and credibility due to program successes and a solid empirical grounding. Internationally, organizations such as Save the Children, UNICEF, the United Nations, and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies all concur that education plays an essential role in peace-building. It is the stance of all these agencies that the immediate effects of ensuring the basic human right to education during times of emergency renders children less vulnerable to being recruited into armed groups. Moreover, in severe cases such as Colombia's protracted conflict, education can provide the foundation for post-war reconstruction, foster tolerance, generate respect for human rights, and break the grinding cycle of poverty.

Within Colombia, this shift away from military intervention as the primary means to establish peace was evidenced in the meteoric rise of Antanas Mockus during the 2010 presidential election. Mockus, the former Rector of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and two-term mayor of Bogotá, ran a brilliant campaign, nearly gaining the Colombian presidency under the slogan "*Con educacion todo se puede*" ("With education, everything is possible"). A political outsider by choice, Mockus is known throughout Colombia for his probity, fiscal austerity, innovative policies, and peculiar behaviors (He once mooned an auditorium of students when they became too unruly. He also famously donned a Spandex suit as "Super Citizen" in order to teach civics). However, eccentricities aside, Mockus was able to elevate himself above the current milieu of "parapolitics" and to rally a disenfranchised public by drawing from the concrete and positive changes he achieved as mayor of Bogotá, as well as from his message of peaceful coexistence.

Under Mockus' stewardship, Colombia's capital city became a laboratory for using education to create a "new sense of urban culture based on mutual respect between citizens" (Montezuma

³ *Convivencia* is a Spanish word with no precise translation into English. It means peaceful interaction and coexistence among member of a social group (Chaux 2009).

2005). Mockus characterized this attitude as *cultura ciudadana* (“civic culture”) and defined it as “the sum of habits, behaviors, actions and minimum common rules that generate a sense of belonging, facilitate harmony among citizens, and lead to respect for shared property and heritage and the recognition of citizens’ rights and duties” (Montezuma 2005). While Mockus may have employed unorthodox methods in striving for these goals, his results were the envy of politicians nationwide. For example, during Mockus’ tenure as mayor, Bogotá’s homicide rate fell drastically from 69.69 to 47.08 per 100,000 people (Cala 2010). It is important to note that sole credit for this decline in hostilities cannot be placed on Mockus’ doorstep; however, his progressive societal framework aimed at “first changing the mindset, then the infrastructure” did play a significant role in the reduction of violence (Cala 2010, Negrón 2004).

On a more micro level, Mockus’ ideology can be witnessed in classrooms throughout the country. Under the Colombian General Education Law, schools are highly decentralized. In practical terms, this pedagogical approach allows each institution leeway to decide on its own, without permission from the Ministry of Education, how much emphasis should be given to peace and democratic education. According to education specialists Enrique Chaux and Ana M. Velasquez, schools that integrate these subjects have been successful in imparting civic competencies and a respect for pluralism, and have developed attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors that help prevent violence. Furthermore, they note that the autonomy granted to each school to implement programs with these progressive aims is beneficial for youth in several ways – three will be briefly addressed here.

First and foremost, Chaux and Velasquez believe that the fundamental mission of education is the comprehensive development of the members in society – emphasizing both knowledge and competencies. In this respect, the independence granted to each school allows for the implementation of creative programs that move away from rote memorization and teacher driven lesson planning in favor of a more holistic educational approach. Secondly, according to a public opinion study conducted by the Institute of Political and International Relations, Colombia’s schools enjoy a higher level of legitimacy than many other government institutions. Thus, the innovative programs that schools employ are usually met with a high level of community support. Finally, Colombia’s pedagogical flexibility allows schools to develop and encourage civic competencies through active and participatory learning. Chaux and Velasquez posit that the development of competencies such as critical thinking, conflict resolution, democratic participation, and the capacity to curb aggression are essential to peacebuilding due to their ability to foster individual and group change. Two such programs of particular note are *Escuela Nueva* (New School) and *Proyecto Ciudadano* (Project Citizen).

First developed in 1975, *Escuela Nueva* has transformed under the leadership of Vicky Colbert (among many others) from a local initiative to accommodate the special needs of rural area schools to Colombian national policy. Through a variety of creative methods, *Escuela Nueva* successfully combines participatory and student centered learning to achieve both short-term goals, such as improved academic achievements and self-esteem, and long-term goals like creating a more democratic and egalitarian society. Praise rightly abounds for this foundation. Along with glowing reports from numerous individual evaluators highlighting increased academic scores and more developed peaceful and democratic attitudes among participants, the World Bank named *Escuela Nueva* “one of the three most outstanding reforms in the developing countries worldwide that has

gone to national scale,” and the United Nation's 2000 Human Development Report selected this ever-expanding program as one of Colombia's three main achievements (escuelanueva.org).

The second program, *Proyecto Ciudadano (PC)*, is housed under the auspices of the Bogotá based organization *Fundación Presencia* – led by executive director Susana Restrepo. This urban focused program is aimed primarily at secondary school youth and uses a participatory active-learning approach to impart democratic values and teach students how to effectively utilize public policy to engage with their government in solving community concerns. To highlight some basic numbers, over the course of the past three years this program has directly affected over 900 teachers and 37,000 students in numerous cities across Colombia (fundacionpresencia.com 2010). Furthermore, under Restrepo's guidance, *Proyecto Ciudadano* has now spread across the country's borders and is formally partnering with sister organizations across South America to implement an adapted model of PC that employs a human rights framework when identifying and addressing problems in the community.

As this brief report illustrates, education's salient role in Colombia's peacebuilding process must not be ignored. Programs such as *Escuela Nueva* and *Proyecto Ciudadano* along with the actions of numerous organizations and individuals are creating tangible positive results through peace and human rights education. Colombia's youth have been protected from physical harm, violent behaviors, and attitudes muted, and instead, values essential for peace have been engendered in new generations of students. Yet in order to construct a future without war, the attack on education in Colombia must be seriously confronted and ultimately halted. Colombia now sits at a crossroads. The new administration could choose the well-worn path of violence and retribution, or it could embark in a new direction in which more peaceful means shape more peaceful ends. As aptly stated by Robert Blair, “[i]f the armed conflict is ever to end, the new generation must learn to clamor for peace” (Blair 2008).

Annotated Bibliography

Amnesty International. 2009. "Everything Left Behind: Internal Displacement in Colombia." London: Amnesty International.

Annotation: In June of 2009, Amnesty International (AI) released this qualitative report using both interview responses from Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and historical data to explain the causes and ramifications of the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Colombians each year. The report also focuses on targeted and vulnerable groups such as women, girls, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendent communities. The report concludes with a call to action to for all parties involved in the conflict to respect the rights of civilians not to be drawn into the hostilities.

----- . 2010. "The Struggle for Dignity and Survival: Human Rights Abuses against Indigenous Peoples in Colombia." London: Amnesty International.

Annotation: In this report issued by Amnesty International (AI), the plight of Colombia's indigenous population is detailed through first-person victim accounts, field research, and

document review. Through this triangulation of data, AI is able to succinctly portray the social denigration of Colombia's indigenous groups that are forcibly removed from their traditional lands. As argued by AI, displacement of these peoples is particularly devastating due to a host of factors. These include, but are in no way limited to, the loss of livelihood, disorientation when forced into cities, and the complete fracturing of traditional norms. This report is most useful for gaining a cursory knowledge of the aforementioned issues, as well as for a brief introduction to the progress being made in regards to indigenous peoples in Colombia (*e.g.*, the endorsement of the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2009).

----- . 2008. "Leave Us in Peace!: Targeting Civilians in Colombia's Internal Armed Conflict." Available Online: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR23/023/2008/en>.

Annotation: Amnesty International report, *Leave Us in Peace*, delivers a holistic account of both the multifaceted issues that continue to extend the protracted Colombian conflict, and the ramifications of these problems, which are inflicted on the general population. Of particular note is the depth in which the authors describe the gross human rights violations suffered by civilians – specific topics highlighted include violence against women and girls, children, and the indigenous and Afro-descendent communities. The report blends scholarly research along with first-person victim accounts to paint a grim picture detailing how thousands upon thousands of Colombian civilians are suffering under the combined repression of internal violence and massive governmental failures.

Anaya, James. 2010. "The Situation on Indigenous Peoples in Colombia: Follow-up to the Recommendations Made by Previous Special Rapporteur." Human Rights Council. New York: United Nations.

Annotation: This report documents the findings of James Anaya, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, on his July 2009 mission to Colombia. While he states it is evident that the Colombian government is making strides towards improving indigenous rights, the undeniable situation on the ground belies any claims of significant achievement. Anaya further argues, *inter alia*, forced relocations, extrajudicial executions by all warring parties, lack of educational and medical resources, and illegal land expropriation practices all demonstrate the Colombian government's gross negligence and direct criminal involvement in threatening the very survival of marginalized indigenous and Afro-descendent groups.

Blair, Robert. 2008. "Waging Peace." *Educational Leadership* September: 32-36.

Annotation: In a succinct account of his research conducted in Colombia, Robert Blair (Fulbright Fellow 2006-2007) offers four lessons that he feels will help transform the atmosphere of Colombian schools. The first is start early. Blair suggests that introducing basic conflict-resolution techniques as early as second grade is essential if aggressive behaviors are to be curbed. Second, opportunities must be created for aggressive students to learn from peaceful peers. To this point, Blair cites current programs in place that are having dramatic positive affects by mixing more aggressive students with more peaceful

ones. Third, give students ownership of the rules. Blair argues that aggressive students are more apt to adhere to rules they helped create. Finally, Blair states that students are capable of managing their own conflicts, all they need is practice.

Bouvier, Virginia M. 2006. "Harbingers of Hope: Peace Initiatives in Colombia." *Special Report 169*. Washington D.C.: US Institute of Peace.

Annotation: In this report Virginia M. Bouvier, Jennings Randolph Program for International Peace, US Institute of Peace, argues that civilians involved in the Colombian conflict are increasingly becoming protagonists searching for ways to end the violence. This movement, states Bouvier, has resulted in the creation of numerous peace initiatives and social movements throughout the country, which have permeated throughout all strata of the population. From a redefining of civil society in conflict zones, to national, local, regional, and international initiatives, the Colombian populace is seeking new and innovative ways to end the violence that has lasted for over five decades. Bouvier closes her report with insightful ways forward derived through the research presented in this report.

----- . 2009. "Building Peace in a Time of War," in Virginia M. Bouvier (ed.). *Colombia: Building Peace in a Time of War*, 3-18. Washington D.C.: US Institute of Peace.

Annotation: In the opening chapter of her book, *Colombia: Building Peace in a Time of War*, Virginia M. Bouvier (US Institute of Peace) gives a detailed overview of the protracted conflict in Colombia. Yet Bouvier deviates from most historical accounts by providing a thorough description of Colombia's peace movements as well as giving precedence to the victims of the conflict instead of the armed actors. Bouvier also presents a five-section outline for the organization of her edited book. Part one provides historical context for the conflict, part two includes case studies of specific peace initiatives, part three discusses the relationship between gender, ethnicity, and the peace process, part four provides a sample of successful local initiatives, and finally, part five offers policy analysis of the role of international organizations in the Colombian conflict.

----- . 2010. "Cautious Optimism for Peace in Colombia." *Peace Brief*. Washington D.C.: US Institute of Peace.

Annotation: This report drafted by Virginia Bouvier of the US Institute of Peace, outlines the challenges and opportunities for the incoming Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos. Bouvier highlights Colombia's dynamic relationship with the United States, regional tensions with Venezuela, and the internal divides between Colombia's various armed actors. As in similar reports, Bouvier combines astute field observations with erudite scholarship when providing recommendations. In this particular report, her findings point to the necessity for "bold leadership" on the part of the Colombian government and of the country's largest guerilla group, FARC, to end decades of violence. Additionally, Bouvier speaks to the need of strengthening civil society in order to ensure the gains made are not ephemeral.

Cala Buendia, Felipe. 2010. "More Carrots than Sticks: Antanas Mockus's Civic Culture Policy in Bogota." *New Directions for Youth Development* 125: 19-32.

Annotation: In this article, Felipe Cala Buendia documents the rise and reasons behind the successes of Bogota's two-term mayor Antanas Mockus. According to Cala, Mockus was able to reorganize Bogota's society through a creative variety of initiatives developed and implemented under a rubric focused on civic culture. One example that Cala focuses a great deal of attention on is the decline in violence during Mockus's tenure as mayor. In his appraisal of this change, Cala does not give Mockus sole credit for this drop, but he does acknowledge Mockus as a key agent for change during this period. This article is one of a handful that deals with Antanas Mockus in a scholarly manner. There are many articles highlighting his eccentric behavior, but this article separates itself due to the rigorous manner in which the author collected and presented the data.

Chaux, Enrique. 2009. "Citizenship Competencies in the Midst of a Violent Political Conflict: The Colombian Educational Response." *Harvard Educational Review* 79, no. 1:84-93.

Annotation: In this article, Enrique Chaux, University de los Andes, uses the protracted internal conflict in Colombia as a framework to explore what role civic education can play in muting aggressive behavior developed by children who are exposed to multiple forms of violence. Chaux begins by briefly describing the Colombian conflict and the literature that highlights the interconnected nature of community violence and development of aggressive behavior in students. He then examines two methods in Colombia currently being employed to address this issue: The Colombian Program of Citizenship Competencies and Aulas de Paz. Chaux concludes with the promising evaluation findings of each program and emphasizes the importance of these types of programming in creating peaceful relationships between children.

Chaux, Enrique, and Ana M. Velasquez. 2009. "Peace Education in Colombia: The Promise of Citizenship Competencies," in Virginia M. Bouvier (ed.). *Colombia: Building Peace in a Time of War*, 159-72. Washington D.C.: US Institute of Peace.

Annotation: Chaux and Velasquez argue that education has enormous potential to transform Colombian society and foster sustainable peace. The reason for this, posit the authors, is that education's fundamental mission is the development of society, and that educational institutions have nation-wide credibility and are a setting for social and academic learning. To support their claims, Chaux and Velasquez offer numerous examples of such programs currently underway in Colombian schools, as well as outline the risks and opportunities of the country-wide Colombian Citizenship Competencies Program. This article clearly highlights the authors' belief that, without taking education into account, the peace initiative in Colombia is at serious risk of only producing short-term gains.

Denissen, Marieke. 2010. "Reintegrating Ex-Combatants into Civilian Life: The Case of Paramilitaries in Colombia." *Peace and Change* 35, no. 2: 328-51.

Annotation: In this article Marieke Denissen discusses the challenges inherent in the demobilization process of former guerillas and paramilitaries in Colombia. Denissen argues that while the decline in violence and an increasing number of former combatants laying down their weapons is promising, without increased investment for the reintegration of ex-combatants these actors are likely to take up arms again-- thereby greatly undermining the efforts for sustainable peace. Denissen discusses in detail five elements she deems essential to keep demobilized actors from returning to the conflict: livelihood security and individual approach to reintegration; prevention of rearming and new recruits; increased community involvement; and decentralizing the demobilization process.

Fernandez, Carlos, Mauricio Garcia-Duran, and Fernando Sarmiento. 2004. "Peace Mobilization in Colombia: 1978-2002" *Accord* 14: 18-23.

Annotation: In *Peace Mobilization in Colombia: 1978 – 2002*, authors Fernandez, Garcia-Duran, and Sarmiento trace back through the history of Colombia's peace movement to illustrate the impact it had on society. Divided into sections by time period, this report allows the reader a succinct account of 24 years of history in five pages. This is both a strength and a weakness. While the breadth of reporting is wide, the brevity of the report does not allow for much depth. Yet this is a good piece with accurate information and is suitable for anyone looking to get a broad overview of the signposts that made up this social movement.

Geske, Mary B., and Mark Ensalaco. 2005. "Three Prints in the Dirt: Child Soldiers and Human Rights," in Mark Ensalaco and Linda C. Majka (eds.). *Children's Human Rights: Progress and Challenges for Children Worldwide*, 111-126. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Annotation: In 16 concise pages, Geske and Ensalaco provide a well-researched and readable history of children's rights. While the primary focus revolves around the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the role this document, and its optional protocol, has played in influencing international norms regarding the recruitment of and penalties for the use of child soldiers, the authors also highlight how advocacy has become action. By including information on the international advocacy network, which was instrumental in bringing about concrete changes in international/US policy, Geske and Ensalaco add a crucial component to the discussion about children's rights, which is often neglected.

Human Rights Watch. 2005. "Colombia: Displaced and Discarded, the Plight of Internally Displaced Persons in Bogota and Cartagena." New York: Human Rights Watch.

Annotation: Human Rights Watch (HRW) issued this report, which examined the barriers that internally displaced persons face in the Colombian cities of Bogota and Cartagena in regards to humanitarian assistance, education, and health care, in 2005. HRW notes that this is not an in-depth comprehensive report but focuses primarily on the immediate needs of displaced families. Keeping that goal in mind, this report achieves its aims. The format employed by HRW provides a brief historical account of the events that have led to the current crisis. Then subsequent sections are included to outline the aforementioned issues

and the underlying complexities that make their resolution so difficult. In particular, this report succeeds in underscoring the problems inherent in providing a free and compulsory education for displaced Colombian youth.

Isacson, Adam, and Jorge Rojas Rodriguez. 2009. "Origins, Evolution, and Lessons of the Colombian Peace Movement," in Virginia M. Bouvier (ed.). *Colombia: Building Peace in a Time of War*, 19-38. Washington D.C.: US Institute of Peace.

Annotation: In this chapter, Isacson and Rodriguez offer a detailed history of the Colombian peace movement since its emergence in the early 1990s. To accomplish this, the authors describe the movement's non-linear history, its primary proponents and detractors, as well as the challenges, setbacks, and hopes for the future. This chapter is a useful reference for a reader who is interested in both the history of Colombia's conflict and its peace movement. However, perhaps the most interesting aspect of Isacson and Rodriguez's work is how well they illustrate the complexity of Colombia's current situation. The authors are able to weave the history of Colombia's peace process into the multi-faceted questions that shape it. This method grants the reader three benefits: one, an understanding of facts on the ground; two, the clear divisions between the guerillas, the government, and peace movements; and three, the paradoxical rifts between human rights workers and peace activists.

Jaramillo, Rosario, and Jose A Mesa. 2009. "Citizenship Education as a Response to Colombia's Social and Political Context." *Journal of Moral Education* 38, no. 4: 467-87.

Annotation: Rosario Jaramillo of the Colombian Ministry of Education and Jose Mesa from Colegio San José, provide a detailed analysis of-- and context for-- the current programs in place that engender civic competencies in Colombia. The authors do a superb job of tracing the history of civic and moral education in Colombia as it transitioned from the standards set by the Catholic Church to a more inclusive, constitutional, and secular curriculum. Jaramillo and Mesa also highlight the progression of individual programs and governmental initiatives that are fostering a participatory democratic environment. Overall, this article provides a readable history of why civic competencies are necessary in the Colombian context, as well as what programs have been implemented to reach the country's goals. However, one weak point is the section entitled "a critical appraisal." Their brief description of program hurdles are far from complete, and the arguments for increased funding for civic competencies could use more supporting evidence.

McFarland, Maria. 2009. "Obama's Chance to Shift Gears on Colombia." New York: Human Rights Watch.

Annotation: In this persuasive report, Maria McFarland, senior researcher for the Americas Division at Human Rights Watch, calls on the Obama administration for a dramatic shift in its Colombian policy. Throughout the article, McFarland describes the negative ramifications of the collusion between the Uribe government and paramilitary forces. This covert, and illegal, relationship was responsible for thousands of civilian deaths, and was blatantly ignored by former President George W. Bush. As McFarland notes, America's

“special relationship” was justified by claiming Colombia was a bulwark of democracy and stability in the region – even though this is obviously not the case. Therefore, McFarland strongly urges Obama to strengthen his stance that these illegal behaviors will no longer be tolerated if Colombia desires the United States’ continued financial assistance.

McGovern, Jim, Jan Schakowsky, Donald Payne, and Mike Honda. 2010. "Letter on U.S. Aid to Colombia." *Sent to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton*. Washington D.C.

Annotation: This letter, which has now been signed by 53 U.S. congressmen, was sent to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as a recommendation to reevaluate the United States’ financial investment in Colombia. The signatories of this correspondence propose the status quo in Colombia needs significant adjustment, and should shift from costly military offensives to a more holistic policy that focuses on the displaced population, strengthening the court system, and supporting human rights, the rule of law, and democracy. This letter offers an abrupt change in policy and is based on research from numerous international human rights agencies.

Montezuma, Ricardo. 2005. "The Transformation of Bogota, Colombia, 1995-2000: Investing in Citizenship and Urban Mobility." *Global Urban Development* 1 (1).

Annotation: In this article, Ricardo Montezuma examines the transformation of Colombia’s capital city of Bogota under two mayors – Antanas Mockus and Enrique Penalosa. The author divides this transformation into four sectors: space, society, economical, and political. An interesting note about this article is that Montezuma displays the environment that each mayor left for the other. For example, Mockus’ innovative campaigns to foster a sense of civic culture granted Penalosa an audience willing to adhere to many of his policies. This article also clearly distinguishes the primary goals between these two men. Mockus focused heavily on improving the mindset of the populace while Penalosa devoted time and resources to public works projects.

Moor, Marianne. 2007. "A New Start, an Open End. The Reintegration of Individual Demobilized Combatants in Colombia " *Colombia Intervention* 5 (3): 191-202.

Annotation: Marianne Moor’s article is divided into two main segments based off a study conducted in Colombia that examined the problems of the government run reintegration program for former combatants. The first offers a litany of reasons why the reintegration process in Colombia is failing its participants. Then, in the second section, Moor takes the lessons learned from the faltering government program and assists the indigenous organization *Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca* (ACIN) in developing their own social reintegration program focused on the “homecoming” of former indigenous fighters. Through the hard lessons learned by government mistakes in conjunction with infusing traditional indigenous values and social norms, the ACIN is making progress in its reintegration program.

Morgenstein, Jonathan. 2008. "Consolidating Disarmament: Lessons from Colombia's Reintegration Program for Demobilized Paramilitaries." *Special Report 217*. Washington D.C.: US Institute of Peace.

Annotation: Morgenstein's report, which was based on the findings of a three-week field assessment, offers valuable lessons learned from Colombia's program to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate (DDR) former paramilitaries, guerillas, and child soldiers. As Morgenstein states, the disarming and demobilizing of armed actors has progressed surprisingly well, yet Colombia has faltered significantly in reintegrating former combatants into society. Throughout the report, the author notes governmental shortcomings in areas such as educational opportunities, the dispersal of promised stipends, and lack of medical and psychological care. According to Morgenstein, there is a limited time to carry out the reintegration process, and if the Colombian government fails to provide ex-combatants with a sustainable alternative to support themselves and their families, the DDR process could actually hinder peace efforts.

Novelli, Mario. 2010. "Education, Conflict, and Social (In)Justice: Insights from Colombia." *Educational Review* 62 (3): 271-85.

Annotation: Mario Novelli, University of Amsterdam, draws from his own fieldwork experience in Colombia to highlight education's potential as both a tool for building peaceful coexistence and a catalyst for instigating and perpetuating conflict. To explain this phenomenon, Novelli includes a history of the Colombian conflict since the early 1960's, provides an overview of relevant literature between education and conflict, and illustrates why educators are frequently targeted by armed actors. Additionally, Novelli addresses the transnational economic, diplomatic, and military practices of powerful donor nations that complicate and sustain the current violent environment in Colombia.

Sanin, Francisco Gutierrez. 2010. "Organizing Minors: The Case of Colombia," in Scott Gates and Simon Reich (eds.). *Child Soldiers in the Age of Fractured States*, 121-42. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Annotation: Sanin takes an unemotional look at a few of the fundamental reasons why the recruitment of child soldiers in Colombia persists, as well as why this practice is not sustainable for the groups who utilize the youth for military purposes. Throughout the chapter, the author provides a detailed analysis on the push and pull factors that cause children to enlist in armed groups, the advantages and disadvantages for guerilla groups who employ child soldiers, and finally the incentive structures that each militarized group offers. This final aspect of study is Sanin's most useful and unique. Many authors and organizational reports discuss the reasons why Colombian children "join" a guerilla or paramilitary group, yet few discuss the intricacies of the varying actors. This analysis is important because each group fosters a distinct personality in its member, and these differences should be taken into account when creating reintegration programs.

Save the Children. 2009. "Rewrite the Future: Education in Emergencies." Available Online: http://www.ineesite.org/uploads/documents/store/Education_in_emergencies_ReWrite_the_Future_Brief.pdf.

Annotation: In this policy report, Save the Children outlines education's salient role in emergency situations and protracted humanitarian crises. The report is divided into three primary sections and discusses why education is needed in emergencies, the progress that has been made, and areas that still require more work. Though brief, the information is delivered in a succinct manner and would be useful for anyone interested in learning about education in emergencies or for practitioners looking for concise information on this subject.

Shifter, Michael. May 4, 2010. "President Spandex?" *Foreign Policy*. Available Online: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/04/the_post_uribe_president.

Annotation: In this article, Michael Shifter provides a brief look at the reasons behind the rise of Antanas Mockus in the 2010 Colombian presidential elections. According to Shifter, Mockus, who is almost as well known for his eccentric behavior as his innovative policies, offers the frustrated Colombian populace a change in direction without straying too far from the "democratic security" policies of the Uribe administration. The author also notes two salient reasons that Mockus is gaining widespread support. First is the concrete positive results he created as the mayor of Bogotá, and second is that Mockus is an incredibly shrewd, yet austere and honest, politician.

United Nations Development Group. 2010. "MDG Good Practices: Together We Can Do More." Available Online: <http://www.undg-policynet.org/?q=node/11>.

Annotation: The second chapter of the UNDG's report, MDG Good Practices, provides concrete examples from participating countries in the realization of Millennium Development Goal number two – universal primary education. This entire report is useful for teachers and policy-makers alike, due to the fact that examples provided have been proven successful and are replicable in various circumstances and environments. In the Colombian context, the section dealing with the School Fee Abolition Initiative (SFAI) is particularly relevant. Today, thousands of Colombian youth that are eligible to attend public schools are denied access due to the related costs associated in attending. Therefore, Colombia's participation in programs such as SFAI would give students struggling with poverty the opportunity to gain at least a primary education.

UNICEF. 2010. "The Central Role of Education in the Millennium Development Goals." *2010 MDG Summit High-Level Round-Table, New York*. Available Online: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/ED_new/images/education_for_all_international_coordination_new/PDF/analyticalnote.pdf.

Annotation: The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) drafted this report with two separate, yet interrelated purposes. The first addresses the need for increased funding by both governments and individual donors for the realization of the Millennium

Development Goal (MDG) of universal primary education. The second highlights the fact that this alarming shift in resources is undermining hard fought gains, hindering the realization of universal primary education, and actually having a detrimental effect on the actualization of other MDGs such as gender parity, poverty relief, and the reduction of child mortality rates. The bulk of the report is spent providing evidence that successfully supports these claims. Additionally, this document is useful for anyone with a general interest in the topic, policy makers seeking information to support claims for increased educational funding, or teachers seeking best practices.

-----, 2007. "UNICEF Humanitarian Action Update: Colombia." (2007), Available Online: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/Colombia_HAU_Sep_2007.pdf.

Annotation: The humanitarian action update describes the current situation on the ground in Colombia as well as provides information on the work that UNICEF is currently undertaking for the protection of women and children in this war torn country. The report is useful for the reader searching for quantitative analysis of the conflict or those interested in understanding UNICEF's salient role in preserving a sense of stability in the lives of marginalized populations caught in Colombia's protracted internal struggle.