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Introduction: Peace Building in Post-Conflict Contexts, a Special Issue of *In Factis Pax*

Janet Gerson
International Institute on Peace Education

Anita L. Yudkin Suliveres
UNESCO Chair for Peace Education
University of Puerto Rico

This special issue is inspired by the 2016 Peace Accords in Colombia to end the fifty years' war. Peace negotiations took place between the government and the FARC guerilla leadership. Despite this major achievement, serious concerns remain for how Colombians can actualize this accord into an authentic transition from deadly civil war to alternative, non-violent, constructive relations.

Much has been written on post-conflict reconciliation especially in social psychology. Issues of transitional justice have been reflected upon in the law theory literature. Often the primary actors considered are governments and/or international organizations such as the United Nations, the International Court of Justice, and the International Criminal Court. This issue on peace building in post-conflict contexts brings together diverse perspectives and actions in peace education and social justice studies.

Recognizing both the dangers and the potential, multi-level efforts for peaceful transformations are in process within Colombia with other warring

groups, regional communities, and with external forces -- corporate, transnational, and international. These efforts are taking place through civil society initiatives, peace education in formal educational settings, and among public groups, toward empowering citizens and transforming the civil and social cultures of Colombia from war to cultures of peace.

Although focused on the Colombian process, the articles included in this special issue address other topics related to peace building in post conflict contexts as they contribute to better understanding the complex realities in which these take place. Evidence for the global relevance of peace education and civil society initiatives is evinced by the contexts and nationalities of the contributors to this special edition -- primarily Colombia, but also from and about Argentina, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, and the Niger Valley, with authors additionally from Portugal, Puerto Rico, Italy, and the United States.

We are most fortunate to have this wide range of experience, region, and expertise represented in this issue. Latin American expert, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, a Portuguese scholar and activist, presents a sophisticated political perspective on the forces that compete for the peace and pieces of Colombia's post-conflict transition. Latin American scholars and activists, Anaida Pascual Morán from Puerto Rico and Alicia Cabezudo from Argentina, each bring that overview to their peace educational understanding of Colombian transitional efforts.

US professors and conflict specialists pair with colleagues and students: Jill Strauss and Michelle Black question the gaps in impact of contact programs for Northern Ireland. Beth-Yoshida, Joan Lopez, and Aldo Civico present their research on how youth leaders used arts to restore a community in Colombia. US doctoral candidate Imoh Colins Edozie grapples with how to integrate human rights theory into transforming poverty in his homeland, the Niger Delta.

Finally, professors from Argentina and Lebanon use university classrooms for cultivating and assessing peace. Andrea Arce-Trigatti and Florencia Beatriz Santucho discuss how teaching literature can serve as space for transformation and peace pedagogy. Ghada Chehimi and Nadine Joudi discuss the challenges of educating teachers for peace in post-conflict Beirut.

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