



Foro Nacional Jóvenes Actores de Paz

Bogotá, 2 y 3 de septiembre de 2015

<http://jovenesactoresdepaz.com>

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“Getting to know the dreams of each other in order to be free together”

At the “Young Peace Agents” National Forum held in Bogotá on the **2nd and 3rd of September 2015**, young men and women representing various organizational experiences, from several areas and contexts within the country, discussed and exchanged ideas, experiences and thoughts on Peace from the following perspectives: The complete enjoyment of rights; The demilitarization of life, culture and territories; and Art and culture as a pedagogy for peace building.

Resulting from the event, this declaration was created as a mechanism of sharing with society at large what we as youths see as main concerns, and what proposals we bring forth in the national context of peace negotiations and dialogues.

We wish for the state, illegal armed actors, civil society, international cooperators and, above all, the youths to resume the ideas raised here, and take them into account as a contribution to strengthen real peace, that includes social justice, equality, non-discrimination, and that is inclusive and much more than the just the silencing of weapons.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The youths present at the forum identified in Colombia the following problems that affect our lives directly:

- Use and abuse by different armed groups of children and young people – mainly from marginalized sectors.
- Stigmatization of youth practices, social and political criminalization of different social sectors that affect our effective enjoyment of rights, and furthermore create invisible barriers.
- Low confidence and belief in state institutions.
- Consolidation of a social model based on patriarchy and resource extractivism.
- A militarization of life: the persistence of violence as means of social regulation and the maintenance of a friend-enemy logic in various spheres of life.
- The invisibilization of experiences, practices and knowledge of grassroots organizations in various national territories.
- Inequality and impoverishment, mainly in rural areas.
- A culture of violence that has naturalized itself in our daily practices.
- Little access to basic rights such as education, health, and dignified work, which stands in stark contrast to the illicit dealings in relation to youth crime.
- The precarious restorative justice models applied to adolescents and youths.
- Exploitation of youths for cheap labor.
- State policies that are constructed without involving those who they concern or those who are directly affected by them.
- Established strategies by the state and groups outside the law, which restrict and criminalize us.

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PEACEBUILDING DEMANDS

Given the aforementioned aspects that affect the development of life of young people, we demand that:

The State

- Increase financial support to productive youth initiatives by different local authorities.
- Generate public policies that are articulated in conjunction with youths from different territories within the country.
- Ensure access to quality education in marginalized areas through the construction of public universities.
- Provide dignified employment opportunities and alternatives to joining the armed conflict.
- Abolish mandatory conscription and support the proposal for an alternative social service in place of military service.
- Implement restorative justice systems, adapted to youth in its differentiation and integration.
- Prosecute adults who violate the rights of youths, not the youths that are subjugated to criminal activities.
- Perform a comprehensive assessment of the educational model, making it relevant to the context of youths.
- Promote and respect the right to conscientious objection as a constitutional right, not only from the perspective of refusing military service, but also the right to refuse taxation that promote warfare and conflict.
- Follow the orders of the Constitutional Court that demands the abolition of arbitrary arrests for military recruitment purposes.
- End the creation and recreation of an economic model that sustains the war.

The Armed Groups

- Accept their responsibility for the destruction of the material and social structure.
- Ensure truth, justice, reparation and the guaranty of non-repetition to the victims of the conflict, including children and young people.
- Recognize and end the exploitation of children and young people for warfare.
- Immediately stop the dynamics of warmongering.
- Respect the communities living in areas directly affected by the conflict.
- Abide by the agreements reached at the negotiation talks held in Havana.
- Fulfill and comply by the terms agreed on at the table of negotiations.

The Havana negotiations (Colombian State – FARC-EP)

- Meet the agreements of de-escalation of the conflict, which includes demining territories and the safeguarding of children and adolescents who are and have been in the cross-points of the conflict.
- Generate an appropriate and neutral verification mechanism of the terms and conditions agreed upon.

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- Move forward in the process to reach an early termination.
- Reach a peace agreement that benefits the Colombian people as a whole, and not only the groups of interests partaking in the negotiations.
- Act truthfully

The Civil Society

- Make possible the arrangement of alternative forms of livelihoods, recognizing the cultural traits of its people and ensuring their return to their territories.
- Contribute from their local contexts.
- Secure that the post-conflict era and process will be defined by the forces of their communities.
- Avoid stigmatization of young combatants in order to facilitate their social reintegration process.
- Promote new practices for coping with conflict.
- Understand the dynamics of restorative justice and prepare themselves to participate in it.
Strengthen networks of prevention from the perspective of restorative justice.
- Act in respect of rights, in media and social media.
- Respect and recognize the identities of youths.
- Assume decisive attitudes.

Media and institutions of communication

- Stop promoting news that criminalize and affect the image of youths negatively.
- Stop producing television programs that promote a culture of violence.

PROPOSALS

- To conclude, as young people organized in various groups, organizations, processes and platforms, we propose to all actors:
- Improve conditions for communities that have historically been excluded and marginalized, in order to live with dignity, without humiliation and with basic needs fulfilled.
- Give the necessary recognition to grassroots organizations as key planners for prevention of violence: they are vital in this moment.
- Maintain and develop actions of resistance, building on various scenarios and proposals from young people.
- Persist in forming critical consciousness.
- Persevere with claiming and demanding rights.
- Consolidate a peaceful and comprehensive conflict management.
- Construct purposeful and sustainable legal and economic options in territories, adapted to their specific contexts.
- That the decision makers take into account our recommendations.
- Recognize children, young men and women as agents of peace and social change.

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- Ensure the creation of a national platform, cultural and educational spaces, enabling various youth organizations to work together, cooperating in decentralized actions to strengthen organizations and advocacy groups.
- Promote workspaces, collaborative and cooperative networking among young people that enable the strengthening of the social environment.
- Recognize the autonomy of agrifood territories.
- Promote the recovery of farming cultures in relation to their farming and food practices.

We are the youth participants of the processes that made up this Forum, who bring forth these ideas and proposals that constitutes this Declaration.

The participating organizations and processes of the forum:

- Cooperativa Crecer – Tópaga, Boyacá.
- Fundación Paz y Bien – Cali
- Proyecto Utopía – Casanare
- Acción Colectiva de Objetores y Objetoras de Conciencia (ACCOOC) – Bogotá
- Asociación AJEFUM – Córdoba.
- Colectivo Barrios del Mundo – Bogotá
- Fundación Juan Manuel Bermúdez Nieto– Nacional
- Corporación Oriana
- Red Organizativa y Productiva de Jóvenes Campesinos. Asociación Campesina de Antioquia
- Palenques Juveniles de los Municipios de Puerto Tejada, Guachené y Buenos Aires de UOAFROC –Norte del Cauca
- Corporación Platóhedro – Medellín
- Asociación Juvenil de Arte Social Videos y Rollos – Bogotá
- Asociación de Jóvenes Emprendedores Forjando un Mejor Mañana – AJEFUM.
- Armemos Parche.
- Mesa ambiental No le Saque la Piedra a la Montaña.
- Movimiento de Unidad Territorial EL MUTE.
- La Redada Miscelánea Cultural.
- Golpe de Barrio.
- Skyzofrenia Crew.
- Egipto Barrio con Ilusiones.
- Colectivo Libremente.
- EntreRedes.
- La Red de Organizaciones por la Paz.

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