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Science for peace, building the future of human capital

Andrea Ortega Bechara
Universidad del Sinú, Colombia

Science and technology have achieved incredible advances in the last hundred years. From spaceships to television, from nuclear weapons to enormous advances in health and in the life-span, it can be said that in the past century humanity has advanced more than in the previous one thousand years. There is one field, however, where there seems to have been no progress whatsoever. Yet this field, where humanity is lagging behind, might be the most important of them all. We are talking about the lack of progress in the mentality of human beings what we wish for, how we think, how we organize our lives and the institutions of society. And yet, because of our advances in science and technology, we are now responsible not only for our individual well-being, but for the future of humankind. Unless we apply our minds to the art of living together in peace, of enjoying life without exhausting the environment in which we live, the future of our race is in danger of being obliterated. To address this issue we created the Science for Peace project, a groundbreaking applied research initiative that attempts to lie down the foundations of a systematic study, based on the recently emerged discipline of positive psychology, to understand the broad psychosocial consequences of violence: its roots, its harms, and the paths of recovery from its damaging effects. The project takes place in Colombia, and includes victims of war, former guerrilla members, children and adolescents. The ultimate goal is to create a science of peace-building based on a model that other countries going through similar situations might benefit. With co-founder of Positive Psychology, Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi as Scientific Director and a blue ribbon team of world leading scholars in the field, the study offers the possibility of becoming a major scientific accomplishment in recent human history.

Biography

Andrea Ortega Bechara is the Founder and Director of the Positive Psychology Institute Flourish in Colombia, Founder and President of the Colombian Positive Psychology Association, and a Member of Universidad del Sinu General Council's board. She is also the Founder of the Science for Peace Project and leads a large scale well being program at Universidad del Sinu with over 9000 participants. Her goal is to conduct rigorous research in the field of positive education and positive organizational scholarship that can help individuals, communities and organizations to flourish. She studied the Master of Applied Positive Psychology program at the University of Pennsylvania. She has a Master of Science in Organizational and Social Psychology from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a BS in Philosophy from Université Paul Valéry Montpellier III. She is also graduated with honors as a Lawyer from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

a.ortega.bechara@unisinu.edu.co

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