



Strategic Community Building is Peace Building

YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY PROGRAM

*Our program was born with the realization that urban expansion and urban conflict go in tandem. This led us to ask: **What is the interplay between urban expansion and urban conflict in relation to youth leadership and grassroots community building?***

Our contribution to the field of conflict resolution and peace building rests in our exploration of the ways in which **theories and practices from the field of conflict resolution can help us understand urban conflict, and construct a model for strategic community building.**

Our Program's Mission is to promote innovative research, practice and education to strengthen and develop the peace leadership capabilities of youth in urban communities.

Our Vision is to be the world's premier platform to promote safe, resilient and thriving urban communities.

The Youth, Peace and Security Program is designed to identify and then act on the linkages between urban conflict, violence, youth and security, and to elicit and further develop best practices among youth leaders. This is based on our guiding premises that **strategic community building is peace building, that social change requires a bottom-up approach accompanied by a top-down effort, and that youth possess the leadership potential and creativity to transform their social contexts.** By systematically identifying the relationship between urban conflict, youth and security, and by partnering with grassroots youth organizations, we aim to promote innovative research, practice and education to strengthen and develop the sustainable peace leadership capabilities of youth in urban communities.

Strategic Goals: Youth Leading the Way!

- Youth in conflict with the law transition out of violence.
- Youth develop transformational leadership capacity and youth networks.
- Youth discover their talent and design their career path towards gainful employment.
- Youth sensitive public policy discourse and practice is developed and implemented.

Our Guiding Principles:

- When alternatives are presented, youth choose a more constructive path to fulfill their needs.
- Everyone has a talent through which to give his or her unique contribution to a community or a larger society.
- When collaboration is recognized as a value, leaders create networks that scale and deepen the work and make it sustainable.
- For change to be sustainable, a bottom-up approach needs to be accompanied by a top-down effort.

Our Theories of Change:

DEVELOPING BEST PRACTICES AMONG YOUTH LEADERS

THEORY 1: If youth who live in marginalized and violent urban areas are supported in developing leadership capacity and youth networks, then they are empowered to transform their communities, and help youth in conflict with the law to transition out of violence.

PROMOTING RESEARCH TO STRENGTHEN PEACE-BUILDING CAPABILITY

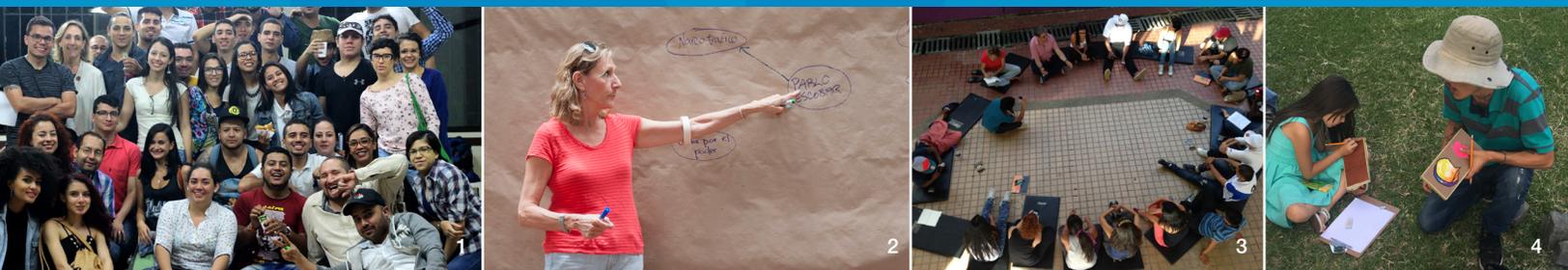
THEORY 2: If youth community-building initiatives are systematically monitored and evaluated, then larger lessons on urban peace-building and its intersection with security can be inferred and disseminated to scale the impact.

YOUTH SENSITIVE PUBLIC POLICY DISCOURSE

THEORY 3: If lessons learned are disseminated, then youth sensitive public policy is developed, implemented and monitored.

EDUCATING THE YOUTH FOR PEACE-BUILDING

THEORY 4: If lessons learned are channeled through formal and informal educational programs, then a community of practice is established that generates innovative applied knowledge and sustained outcomes.



1. Workshop on proposal writing through Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) approach held with youth leaders across the city of Medellín, Colombia. 2. Dr. Beth Fisher-Yoshida, YPS Lead, mapping the violence in Medellín, Colombia, in a workshop with youth leaders. 3. Mi Sangre leading an initiative with youth in Comuna 8 of Medellín, Colombia. 4. Escuela Popular de Arte (EPA) is a school of graffiti based in Comuna 5 of Medellín, Colombia, led by youth leaders and supporting artistic expression in youth and children.

Advanced Consortium on Cooperation, Conflict and Complexity (AC⁴) strives to foster sustainable peace through innovation and integration. We work to enable and support integrative research and practice on sustainable peace, constructive conflict engagement, and sustainable development. This is built on an understanding that building peaceful and sustainable societies requires a systemic approach, leveraging the expertise and knowledge of scientists and practitioners from across disciplines and areas of practice. By connecting thought leaders at Columbia University and around the world, AC⁴ works to build opportunities to apply leading-edge science to generate solutions for some of our most pressing social and environmental challenges.

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