

Section I

- a. The purpose of the project was to train youth that live or work in the streets as health promoters. This would be achieved by training and strengthening the educators and outreach workers currently employed at the organization to ensure sustainability.
- b. The primary struggle with the project was the lack of coordination and communication between the director and the technical team with whom I worked on a daily basis. In terms of developing the project more concretely and taking the time to plan, the director would not sit and discuss possible options, and would also not allow me the liberty to carry out the project as planned considering other activities were going on in the organization. As a result, I did not trust significantly investing the Davis funds into future projects where I would not be present because of the lack of interest and coordination demonstrated by the director and administration.

While the funds enabled me to work as a volunteer in their summer program and I coordinated with other volunteers on the daily activities and planning of the summer events, it was not what I hoped for as an experience in project development. However, during this period, approximately 65 children and youth participated in the month long summer program and 3-day beach trip. They received education on the Rights of the Child, sex education, and learned about Ecuadorian culture. Simultaneously, the summer activities prevented the children from working in the streets during their summer vacation and decreased the risks they face on a daily basis. The children ranged from 5-17 years old, both male and female, were either working or homeless children, and came from low-income families. A weakness of the project was that it was not very sustainable as the summer program was almost entirely run by volunteers and not long-term employees, and was the leading reason for leaving the organization. There was, however, a training in non-formal education for outreach workers which was given and will be a sustainable change for the organization in future outreach efforts. Additionally, it is assumed that the information imparted in the summer program will protect the children from human rights abuses, teen pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections.

Due to the difficulties with Fundacion Proyecto Salesiano, I invested the remainder of the Davis funds and my time with the organization Humor y Vida (Humor and Life). The organization organizes a 3-week long trip every year to the border region between Colombia and Ecuador to give professional workshops to children, youth, and adults as part of their mission to serve displaced populations from Colombia. This year they provided workshops of drama, art, clown, stilts, photography, dance, acrobatics, and music to over 800 people in four different communities near the Colombian border with high refugee populations. Through discussions and planning, they will also begin a youth group that focuses on Colombian youth and issues of displacement and racism in Quito that will continue throughout the year. It was significantly easier to work with this organization because they were much smaller, very dedicated and open to new ideas. As a result, decisions could be made more quickly and they were focused in their planning and organization. Considering the organization is relatively new and small, the Davis funds enabled this year's trip to

happen despite difficult economic conditions, and money saved on general costs will be able to be used to pay for an administrative assistant for the upcoming fiscal year. This will significantly strengthen the organization's ability for program development overall development, thus benefiting more Colombian refugees in the future.

Section II

- a. Peace is a state of harmony where people are able to coexist with one another in a respectful and loving manner, thus having no infringement on their personal liberties and rights. This does not always mean an absence of conflict, but that conflicts are resolved through dialogue and respect rather than hatred and violence.

Considering the project ended up being two, each one contributed to peace in a different manner. The summer program with street children armed youth with knowledge to protect their right to live in peace, free from violence and abuse. Frequently, they are exploited for labor due to their lack of knowledge about their rights but during the summer they were able to play and learn rather than be exposed to the dangers of the street. At the same time, the organization received lots of press for the summer program, which further educated the public on the realities of street children and hopefully decreased discrimination and increased understanding.

Humor y Vida's target population was young Colombian refugees, a group that faces intense discrimination and prejudice in Ecuador. Many times, these individuals are unable to express themselves through art and culture as they lack the economic means or are simply not welcomed into Ecuadorian society. Art is a powerful tool to communicate with other individuals, and this project enabled children and youth to express themselves through various artistic forms. During the project, many individuals showed the impacts of displacement, war, and discrimination in their lives when they had previously been silent. While this creates peace for themselves through self-expression, it also opens up a dialogue with Ecuadorian society and decreases prejudice and conflict.

Through both of these projects, I have learned that direct dialogue is not always possible at first. Many people need alternative forms of expression, and this is even more important when discussing painful topics, especially with children. As a result, everyone can participate in peace talks, but this may take on several forms. This project also confirmed previous beliefs that I had that children are intelligent and resilient, capable of making their own decisions and possess the skills to bring about change in society as children, not just later as adults.

- b. As important as good intentions are, we are not creating peace if those we seek to help are not included in the process as primary stakeholders. If we want to bring peace to street children, then the children should be included at all times in the process. We must possess the belief that all people know better than anyone else what is best for them in their lives, children or adults. In order to create peace and dialogue, the most important thing is to come to the table with great humility and the willingness to listen completely. This often takes much more time and effort than imposing an idea or project, but the effect is long-lasting and sustainable peace.

Promotores de Progreso: Empowering Street Youth in Quito, Ecuador
Ecuador
Columbia University School of Social Work
Matt Haygood, USA, International House New York

Other youth performing a drama about the right to a family.



A young girl learning art techniques near the Colombian border where many Colombians have been displaced by violence.



To wrap up the summer program, we took 40 working and homeless children to the pacific coast. Jairo sold candy on the streets of Quito. This was his first time at the beach.

