

YOUTH AS A **CATALYST** FOR PEACE:

Helping Youth Develop the
Vision, Skills, and Behaviors
to Promote Peace



Center for Civil Society
and Governance



Youth as a Catalyst for Peace

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Vision, Skills, and Behaviors
to Promote Peace



Los jóvenes proponen una nueva
forma de ver y trabajar los conflictos



June 2005

Dear Friends,

The critical link between youth and conflict is receiving more and more attention among development professionals, both in the U.S. and internationally. It is increasingly clear that how our world's youth 1) view themselves and 2) interact with their peers, their families, and their communities are important predictors of our global future. Whether youth choose violence or peaceful resolution when presented with tomorrow's challenges depends in large part on what opportunities they are given today.

The Academy for Educational Development (AED) has over 30 years of experience in youth development. Our earliest program, in 1972, focused on developing and sustaining education and work councils in 20 communities in the U.S. Based on the experience of the past three decades, we have learned that youth are much more likely to choose peaceful resolution of conflicts if they have:

- a stronger sense of self-esteem;
- more solid connections to their own community;
- a sense of empowerment to make decisions affecting their own future;
- adequate opportunities to get to know youth who are different than themselves;
- access to programs to improve leadership, communication, and basic conflict resolution skills; and
- avenues for job training and/or employment.

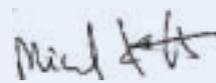
We have learned another valuable lesson through our youth programming, both domestic and throughout the globe: Many of our most successful youth and

peacebuilding projects were originally designed to meet other development objectives in the areas of health, education, environment/natural resources, civil society, or other traditional development sectors. Either coincidentally or by design, these youth programs also provided youth with the types of skills and opportunities outlined under the bullets above. With this knowledge, we are now able to design all of our youth activities with an eye toward instilling in youth the desire and know-how to build peace.

This brochure is not intended to serve as a comprehensive inventory of AED's youth and peacebuilding activities. Rather, we hope to demonstrate AED's exceptional expertise and broad experience in this area by showing the wide variety of AED projects that have set the stage for peacebuilding through youth development.

We at AED are convinced that there is no better way to work toward future peace than to capture and channel the imagination, passion, dynamism, capacities, and commitment of our youth. By filling young people with confidence and giving them the tools to build peace in their own communities, we lay a solid foundation for our future.

Sincerely yours,



Michael Kott
Vice President and Director
Center for Civil Society and Governance
Academy for Educational Development
Email: mkott@aed.org

Introduction

In both developed and developing nations, most conflicts are rooted in unfortunate realities of economic inequality and political and cultural exclusion. These realities are often exacerbated by ingrained and mutual habits of distrust, recrimination, and misunderstanding. Conflict itself is a natural part of social and political life. Where societies respond to conflict violently, however, all aspects of traditional development—including economic growth, health, and education—can be seriously disrupted or impeded altogether.

Donor agencies, including the U.S. Agency for International Development, are paying increased attention to the real and potential linkages between youth and peacebuilding. Youth tend to be naturally idealistic, creative, and energetic. They are positioned to play a very important role in managing conflicts and differences. Where they are given adequate opportunities for positive involvement, they can be critical to ensuring longer-term stability, producing effective outcomes within communities, and offering protection from future conflicts. The converse is also true: When youth feel alienated, frustrated, powerless, and deprived of basic social and physical needs, they are easily drafted into service by violent forces, including gangs and armed insurgent groups.

What factors determine whether youth choose a violent or peaceful response to a given conflict?

What AED has discovered during the past three decades of youth programming is that, while keeping youth healthy, ensuring youth's access to education, giving youth a voice in decisionmaking about their future, and helping to prepare youth for work, many of our programs have also succeeded in setting the stage for peacebuilding behavior. After careful study of the results of our many youth development programs, we have found that youth are more likely to avoid violence and engage in peacebuilding behavior if they are granted a specific set of opportunities, interrelated and mutually reinforcing, which we call *threshold conditions for peacebuilding*:

- Engaging in political participation
- Forging connections between youth and their communities
- Building constituencies for peace
- Training youth for the workplace
- Building youth confidence and self-esteem

In the main text of this document, we present a selected group of AED's past and current youth activities and approaches, organized according to which "threshold conditions" they help to meet for a defined youth population. In this way, we hope to give the reader an idea of precisely how our projects and approaches set the stage for peaceful social change in a variety of settings via youth involvement.

"...youth are more likely to avoid violence and engage in peacebuilding behavior if they are granted a specific set of opportunities, interrelated and mutually reinforcing, which we call threshold conditions for peacebuilding..."

Engaging in Political Participation

Like all members of society, young people need access to legitimate channels for political participation. Without these channels, they feel disenfranchised and, as a result, are more susceptible to violent movements outside of established community and political structures. This is most likely to occur in developing countries with unstable government structures, weak economies, and a lack of basic security. In such an environment, violent activities may be the only form of political participation open to youth. As a result, they often find themselves in roles as intimidators and aggressors on behalf of specific political factions, sometimes as members of violent gangs.

On the other hand, youth who feel that they have influence, even limited influence, in defining their own future tend to avoid violent behaviors in favor of peaceful dialogue. Having a well-defined channel by which to voice their needs helps youth develop both the will and the ability to shape their future. In addition, youth's involvement in decisionmaking

processes during conflict transformation and resolution can greatly reduce the likelihood of violent outbreaks. AED has found that our youth programming is most successful when it empowers youth to take responsibility for constructive action rather than relying on others.

Forging Connections Between Youth and Their Communities

As illustrated in Robert Putnam's landmark work, *Bowling Alone*, human beings thrive when they connect with civil society in a positive, meaningful, and fulfilling way. Youth are no exception to this basic rule of social engagement. Many youth who find themselves involved in violent conflict are lacking this critical piece of healthy youth development: a positive connection to their home communities—extended family, schools, religious institutions, local businesses, social clubs, and sports teams. Youth who lack the opportunity to connect with community structures have difficulties acquiring the life skills necessary to make decisions geared toward peaceful outcomes.

Conversely, young people that feel connected to their larger communities are much less prone to involvement in violent behavior. Community institutions, sometimes referred to as “shielding” institutions, can serve to guide youth, help forge their identity as essential members of a larger society, and give them solid reasons to resist the

“Community connection tends to make youth more conscious of their future and how they can shape it.”

appeal of involvement in violent activity. Community connection tends to make youth more conscious of their future and how they can shape it. Youth with positive inter-generational relationships, in particular, are much more likely to seek social change via peaceful means. AED has found that programs that establish links between youth and their community can also increase opportunities for youth employment, especially when those programs include community service work or mentoring (see reference to AED's Community YouthMapping methodology on p. 27).

Building Constituencies for Peace

Conflict is particularly common in societies where specific ethnic or religious groups feel that mainstream political, economic, and social institutions are inaccessible to them. In addition, leaders sometimes mobilize support for their political agendas by reinforcing negative ethnic and religious stereotypes. When these stereotypes are adopted by communities, schools, and families, youth from both sides of a conflict learn intolerance and hatred toward those who are different from them. An important threshold for youth

involvement in peacebuilding is thus the building of constituencies for peace—the fostering of trust, good will, reciprocity, and mutuality among youth from different ethnic or religious groups. When youth learn to trust, understand, respect, and maintain a positive dialogue with youth unlike themselves, they are more likely to commit themselves to building and maintaining peace in their own field of influence.

There are many benefits to “peace education” and other training programs that allow young people to transcend factionalism and forge positive connections with members of groups outside their immediate community. Some of AED’s youth programs, including the Young Leaders for Peace and Development (YLPD) program in the Southern Caucasus, have gone the extra step of facilitating connections among youth whose “home” communities are in conflict (see profile of this program on page 19). By helping youth from different backgrounds focus on their shared values and common objectives, these programs help to build awareness of interdependence and a shared destiny. AED has also learned the importance of allowing youth to create and run their own programs, thereby improving their leadership skills and contributing to their sense of self-esteem.

Training Youth for the Workplace

Young people often join violent groups for economic reasons—either because they get paid to fight or because they are promised greater economic opportunities in the future if they do fight. Sometimes joining a violent group meets a youth’s needs to build skills and feel a sense of empowerment and identity. Conversely, youth who are either studying or working are less susceptible to involvement in violent conflict.

The AED programs that contribute to this threshold condition can be divided into two general categories. The first category includes programs that provide youth with general life skills that can be utilized in the workplace and in most human interactions—leadership, communication, discipline, teamwork, and conflict management. Youth possessing these skills are more likely to make choices that value dialogue, cooperation, and shared objectives over estrangement, hostility, and conflict. These skills can be built through training, but also through community and service work. For example, AED’s Community YouthMapping projects help youth develop general workplace skills while providing a valuable resource for their community.

The second category includes programs that provide youth with specific workplace skills—interviewing, presentation, data analysis, radio production, listenership surveying, the use of remote broadcasting and recording equipment, etc. Most of these skills come through the application of training curricula geared toward work in a particular field.

It is important to note that, while education and employment tend to reduce youth involvement in violence, educational opportunities in the absence of work opportunities can also lead to youth violence. If young people find that education provides no rewards in the form of employment, particularly where other community support structures are lacking, they may well turn to violence. In fact, many armed movements have been led by groups of educated youth unable to find jobs. For this reason, AED designs all of its youth training activities with employment generation and sustainability in mind. Where possible, AED's programs encourage youth to identify and create their own future work opportunities.

Building Youth Confidence and Self-Esteem

Like all of us, youth long to feel worthy and respected. Youth who lack self-confidence and have a poor self-image are more susceptible to involvement in groups and situations that offer them a niche, a specific role, and perhaps a sense of power—even if it's the kind of power that comes

from holding a deadly weapon. As a result, these youth often bow to pressure from groups seeking to mobilize violence, especially if those groups offer immediate rewards, be they economic or status-related.

Conversely, young people with a positive self image are much more likely to stand up to pressure from violent forces. AED Community YouthMapping, training, and leadership programs provide youth with the feelings of pride and self-worth that tend to lead them to choose peacebuilding over involvement in violent conflict. Youth with positive self-esteem tend to visualize more easily their own role in a peaceful, productive society.

The next section demonstrates how AED uses a broad range of development approaches to meet the threshold conditions for peacebuilding described above. By helping to create the circumstances necessary for youth to play constructive roles in their communities, AED works to ensure that the leaders of tomorrow's societies make decisions that reflect a commitment to dialogue, tolerance, and peaceful reconciliation of conflict.



"...young people with a positive self image are much more likely to stand up to pressure from violent forces."



Engaging in Political Participation

THE DECISIONS PROJECT IN POLAND: Using AED's youth media and social marketing methodologies to increase Polish youth's participation in democratic decisionmaking

Seven years after the 1989 revolution in Poland, opinion polls showed that advocates of market reform and democracy had stumbled in their attempt to educate young people about the realities and benefits of economic and political change in their country. To address this problem, AED teamed up with Cambridge Studios to implement the *Decyzje* (Decisions) project, an 11-part television series designed to present issues concerning democracy and the free market to Polish youth in a captivating and entertaining manner. In addition, the series encouraged young people to participate more actively, assertively, and confidently in democratic institutions and to vote as informed citizens on issues that affect them. A primary theme of the program was teaching youth how to organize successfully for political influence.

The producers of *Decisions* set about to give Polish youth the knowledge and skills to participate actively in their new society. In style and format, *Decisions* was a blend of the *Lehrer News Hour* and MTV—educational and informative, yet hip, fast-cut, musically upbeat, and youthful. The hosts were two twenty-year-olds with an authentic, natural demeanor broadcasting from a garage. The producers tried to strike a balance between educating youth about the importance of democracy and political participation and giving them the practical tips they wanted (e.g., how to find a job). In each episode, young people explain why they made certain decisions; what they gained and what they lost; and, perhaps most importantly, what they learned in the process.

In one episode of *Decisions*, a “punk” youth group organized and established a formal cooperation agreement with prison authorities to obtain permission to paint the outside prison walls with colorful graffiti designs (which it did, successfully—see photo on p. 21). In this way, the target youth audience learned the importance of establishing associations and organizations to achieve social change. In another episode, a student who was improperly expelled from school stood up for her right to “due process” and won reinstatement by appealing to the Students’ Rights Commission at her school. In a direct, relevant, non-academic way, the target audience learned about the rights of students and individual rights in general.



The following are an example of youth feedback on the *Decisions* show:

“Thanks to shows like Decisions, I can learn about the problems young people have starting out on their own. Being young and inexperienced shouldn’t stop you from becoming someone.”

“The last topic (students’ rights) was great. We need more of this kind of stuff; then maybe young people won’t let themselves get exploited.”

“You cover issues that are very useful for young people. In an age of unemployment and little prospects for the future, it’s a big help to talk about things like how to make money on your own and what you can do with your spare time without breaking the law.”

“At last, a TV program for teenagers which is neither didactic nor authoritarian. A program which shows that it is worth trying by yourself.”

Helping Youth Workers Organize for Survival: AED'S SMARTWORK PROJECT



AED is finding that projects in many of its sectors, including the health sector, are helping youth to develop the knowledge and skills to advocate and push their agendas at the local and national level.

In Vietnam, Tran Thi Dan could see that HIV/AIDS threatened her company. The Haiphong Leather Shoe Company's 11,000 workers are very young, with many coming from the provinces—a workforce profile, she realized, that is particularly susceptible to the disease.

As vice chairwoman of the company's labor union, Dan felt a responsibility to join a newly formed company committee that was targeting both HIV/AIDS infection and the harsh stigma Vietnamese society attaches to it.

The committee making these gains is part of AED's SMARTWork project, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and designed to reach workers—with youth workers a special target—where they spend the bulk of their time, on the job. In addition to Vietnam, AED manages SMARTWork projects in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nigeria, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe.

In addition to preventing the HIV/AIDS epidemic from affecting young workers and crippling nations, SMARTWork is helping to unite young representatives of workforces with government and employer representatives to design and recommend national labor code changes. AED's workshop training and technical assistance prepare the committees to develop their own policies and programs—from educational sessions to condom-dispensing initiatives. In this way, youth learn how to advocate on their own behalf as they teach others new skills for survival.



EXAMPLES OF AED PROJECTS THAT CREATE CHANNELS FOR YOUTH DECISIONMAKING AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:

Coalition for the Active Cleanup of Water Resources (CLARA)

El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, United States, and Venezuela
Under this program, youth develop skills to monitor water quality, identify factors contributing to the deterioration of water quality, and lobby local and national government officials to initiate new policies geared toward improving water quality.

Community YouthMapping (CYM)

Egypt, Haiti, South Africa, and U.S.
CYM is a catalyst for motivating youth to identify existing resources and opportunities in their communities. CYM gives youth (including at-risk youth) a voice in their own community, allowing them to participate in significant decisionmaking on issues affecting young people.

Liberia Community Peace Building and Development

Liberia
Aims to help Liberians create peace and prosperity by strengthening civil society, fostering community-based social and economic development, and strengthening access to and utilization of information and communications systems. Youth Peace Radio Corps is an important component of this project.

Young Leaders for Peace and Development

Southern Caucasus
Helps youth develop leadership skills and concrete skills for participating in community decisions. As an outgrowth of the YLPD program, in 2002, the Young Leaders Association (an NGO) was formed to generate and increase youth participation in public processes and to support public initiatives in peacemaking, civil society development, and maintenance of democratic principles.

THRESHOLD CONDITIONS FOR YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN PEACEMAKING

Development Challenge/ Youth Vulnerability	Desired Condition for Peace-building	AED Tools and Approaches Available
Youth are disaffected and disenfranchised	<p style="text-align: center;">YOUTH ENGAGE IN POSITIVE DECISION- MAKING AND/OR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership development camps • Leadership training • Peer education • Social marketing • Youth media
Youth are skeptical about political system		
Youth have little knowledge about political system		



Forging Connections Between Youth and Their Communities

GLOW and BRO Leadership Development Camps in Armenia



A week of summer camp in the foothills of South Caucasus Mountains is turning into long-term leadership commitment and community connection for Armenian youth.

In a cooperative effort with the Peace Corps, the Academy for Educational Development guided 87 young women through a **Girls Leading Our World (GLOW)** leadership development camp in the summer of 2003. The camp was so successful that New Generation, an Armenian NGO, joined AED and the Peace Corps to launch **Boys Reaching Out (BRO)**, a similar camp for 25 young Armenian men.

Both the GLOW and BRO camps used interactive games, role-playing, and discussions to encourage participants to build leadership skills, set goals, and taking a more active role in their education, health care decisions, and communities. The camps also included sessions in civic education, conflict management, and effective communication.

The youth took the lessons to heart and back to their communities:

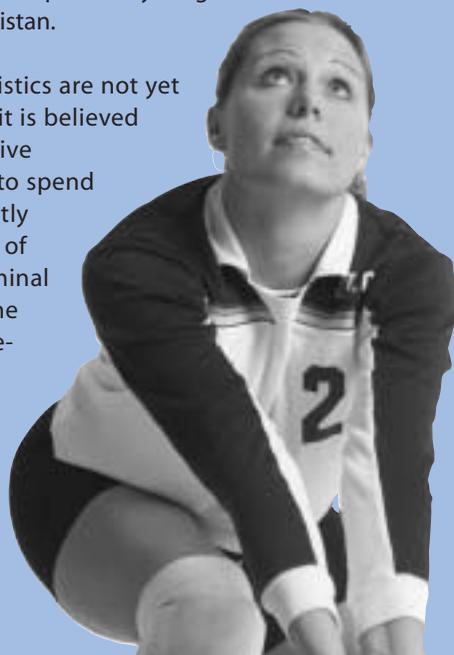
- In Alaveri, former GLOW participants cooperated with young lawyers to help set up a law firm to provide legal consulting services to underserved populations. In Noyemberyan, former GLOW participants have been working with Medicins Sans Frontières to educate people in women's and girls' health issues. In Vanadzor, young women from GLOW organize seminars on effective leadership, communication, and conflict management at the School of Young Journalists and Advocates.
- Thirteen boys from Gyumri who participated in BRO have become regular visitors and activists with New Generation. Through a USAID-funded program known as "Dasusyts," they act as trainers and mentors for socially neglected boys, teaching them responsibility, social service, respect, work ethics, and the importance of attending school.

THE COMMUNITY ACTION INVESTMENT PROGRAM (CAIP) IN KAZAKHSTAN: Providing Constructive Community Sports Alternatives for Youth

Providing youth with the opportunity for involvement in community sports activities is another way that AED has worked to increase the likelihood of peaceful youth behavior. AED's Community Action Investment Program (CAIP) is a USAID-funded project that brings local activists and citizens together to identify, prioritize, and solve their social and economic needs through the implementation of community projects that address tensions or conflicts within a community. The CAIP program aims to generate benefits for a broad spectrum of community members, especially youth, in the form of jobs and basic social services.

In 2003, in close collaboration with community members and local authorities, CAIP successfully enhanced youth participation in community social activities in the city of Turkistan, Kazakhstan, by renovating a school gym and providing sports equipment for gymnastics, volleyball, wrestling, and basketball. Teachers and coaches now have the opportunity to provide refereeing as well as encouragement and leadership for the young athletes in the city of Turkistan.

While reliable crime statistics are not yet available in Kazakhstan, it is believed that providing constructive opportunities for youth to spend their free time significantly decreases the likelihood of their involvement in criminal or extremist activities. The project has directly benefited 2,500 beneficiaries and created 50 short-term and three long-term jobs.



BAREFOOT JOURNALISM IN NEPAL

In the summer of 2000, I helped a group of youth, aged 17 to 20, to establish a community audio tower (CAT) in the village of Dadingbesi, about 600 km northwest of Kathmandu. The week-long training was over and we were preparing to air our first programming when the village was shocked with the news that about a dozen youth, from the same age bracket that I was working with, had left their homes to join the Maoist insurgency.

The village was numbed with this turn of events, but our group managed to launch the CAT as planned. At the end of the first day of broadcasting, a gray-haired grandfather approached me to thank me for saving his grandson from going to the hands of insurgents. His grandson was one of the "producers" of the newly launched community audio tower. According to the grandfather, his grandson had stayed back because the young man had found a proper outlet for his youthful vigor and creativity in the form of the audio tower.

It was a revelation—this simple technology meant a lot more to the participating communities than a simple development communication approach as I had presumed. It was a medium for expressing themselves, being creative, and contributing to their own communities in a meaningful way. The community audio towers brought opportunities for communities to educate and be educated.

Hemlata Rai
AED Consultant

EXAMPLES OF AED PROGRAMS AND APPROACHES THAT HELP BUILD OR REBUILD YOUTH'S CONNECTIONS WITH THEIR HOME COMMUNITIES:



Community YouthMapping (CYM)

Egypt, Haiti, South Africa, and U.S.

AED's CYM is a programmatic approach that enables young people to use their eyes and their feet to identify resources for themselves, their families, and friends by canvassing their

communities. Through this activity, youth are employed in a constructive activity that builds positive connections with their peers and their larger community.

National Service-Learning Partnership

United States

AED's National Service-Learning Partnership is an advocacy network through which more than 8,000 members educate, organize, and mobilize for strategic leadership that promotes and strengthens the practice of service-learning. Service-learning is a teaching method that engages students in service to their schools and communities as part of their academic studies. It helps youth develop a range of service skills, from acts of kindness and caring, to community stewardship, to civic action.

Young Leaders for Peace and Development

Southern Caucasus

Through various YLPD community activities targeting young victims of the civil war between Georgia and Abkhazia, young leaders in the Southern Caucasus have contributed positively to the development of their communities and to civil society as a whole. They learned valuable lessons about how communities and their resources can be galvanized to identify and tackle their own problems and improve their well-being without relying on outside assistance. A striking 80 percent of YLPD graduates remain active as volunteers, assistant trainers, or trainers in YLPD-formed Youth Clubs and involved in community outreach activities initiated under YLPD.

Other approaches that AED can use to foster youth's connections to their community include:

- **Barefoot Journalism Training**—making media accessible to communities by helping youth to operate their own small-scale media endeavors, such as community audio towers (CATs), that build confidence and impart skills to youth community members.
- **Peace Theater**—introducing a participatory theater approach to community youth teams as a way for them to generate pro-peace dialogue in their own communities and to seek community solutions to potential conflicts .
- **Trauma Healing**—a necessary foundation for social reconstruction and preventing the reignition of the cycle of violence in a community. AED has used Playback Theatre Technique, reconciliation circles, and trauma healing circles incorporating traditional rituals and practices. Youth can be trained as actors and facilitators and take trauma healing to neighboring communities.

THRESHOLD CONDITIONS FOR YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN PEACEMAKING

Development Challenge/ Youth Vulnerability	Desired Condition for Peace-building	AED Tools and Approaches Available
Critical community institutions are weak	<p>YOUTH FORGE CONNECTIONS WITH LARGER COMMUNITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRO/Armenia • CAIP/Ferghana Valley • Community Peace Building and Development Project/Liberia • CYM projects/U.S., Egypt, Haiti, South Africa • Decisions Project/Poland • EQUIP 3/Global • GLOW/Armenia • National Service-Learning Partnership/U.S. • YLPD/Southern Caucasus
Youth are disconnected from community institutions		



Building Constituencies for Peace

YOUNG LEADERS FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS REGION: Abkhaz and Georgian Youth Find Common Ground

The civil war between the Republic of Georgia and the region of Abkhazia that ended in 1993 left over 100,000 Georgian and Abkhaz children severely traumatized and homeless. The conflict encouraged and reinforced animosity between Abkhaz and Georgian youth who were both traumatized and disadvantaged by the war.

In 1998, with funding from USAID/Caucasus, AED's Young Leaders for Peace and Development (YLPD) program was launched to assist with the psychosocial rehabilitation of participating Georgian and Abkhaz youth and contribute to a sustained resolution of conflict by building constituencies for peace among these youth.

From its beginning as a U.S. summer camp program reaching 40 young people, YLPD became a multi-faceted, year-round program involving the development of low-cost youth clubs and youth-run NGOs for promising youth leaders engaged in community service, career-oriented educational programs, and employment and income-generation activities. AED collaborated with both U.S. organizations and several Georgian and Abkhazian NGOs to provide activities for the young leaders.

YLPD ultimately reached 510 young war victims—260 Abkhaz youth and 250 Georgian youth. Individuals that demonstrated a commitment to seek and work actively toward peaceful resolutions of conflicts were given priority. Through Youth Leadership Groups, situated in four towns in Georgia and six towns in Abkhazia, the youth participated in computer, English language, and conflict resolution classes conducted by local teachers and local NGO staff. The core youth activities were implemented at a very low cost, approximately \$20 per youth per month.

Two national-level youth-run NGOs (the Academy for Peace and Development in Georgia and the Association of Young Leaders in Abkhazia) and 13 YLPD-initiated youth clubs (all of which achieved NGO status) continue to work on behalf of peace and serve their communities in the Southern

Caucasus. Using the skills learned through YLPD training, leaders of the youth clubs have launched numerous community outreach and income earning projects. Each club, for example, operates an after-school supplemental education program, called "Weekend Schools," for younger children in their communities. The two NGOs have been very successful in securing funding from other sources (including the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Council of Europe, and the Soros Foundation) to continue their activities.

The YLPD and its various components have been successful so far in building a bridge of friendship, understanding, communication and dialogue among teenage war victims of the Georgian and Abkhazian conflict. The 510 youth reached by the program have literally seen their lives transformed. The YLPD program has been cited by the leadership on both sides of the conflict as one of the few areas of positive cooperation and collaboration between them.

A major achievement of the Young Leaders for Peace and Development Program (YLPD) in the Southern Caucasus has been the number of young people from both sides of the Abkhaz and Georgian conflict who have learned to trust, understand, and respect each other, even as hostilities resumed around them.

In October 2001, three years after the establishment of AED's YLPD program, fighting erupted between Georgians and Abkhaz in the Kodori and Gulripsh regions. This was the worst confrontation between the two sides since the May 1998 eviction of Georgians by the Abkhaz from the Gali Region. While the resumption of fighting eroded some trust and confidence between the Abkhaz and Georgian youth and their supporters, it did not destroy it. During this very difficult period, the young people from both sides of the conflict remained in communication with each other. Both condemned the resumption of violence.

The YLPD program has been cited by the leadership on both sides of the conflict as one of the few areas of positive cooperation and collaboration between them. In many respects, this speaks louder than anything else about the strengths and accomplishments of the YLPD program.

USING PEACE MEDIA IN SRI LANKA: Reaching a Youth Audience with Core Messages Regarding Peace and Reconciliation

Sri Lanka's youth constitute a key stakeholder group in the country's peace building process, but one that can be challenging to reach in a way that truly engages them in learning, dialogue, and action around issues of peace and reconciliation. Young people aged 14-18 in Sri Lanka's village schools (grades 9 to 12) are a particularly important subgroup because they are still forming attitudes toward the country's ethnic group relations, longstanding conflict, and how to build peace and reconciliation. When building constituencies for peace in Sri Lanka, AED has found that it is critical to reach individuals at the broader community level who exercise considerable influence on learning, attitude development, and behavior patterns among youth in this age group: peers, teachers, and parents.

Peace Media products are powerful tools in reaching youth audiences with peace building themes such as ethnic group relations and reconciliation. During 2003-04, AED's Sri Lanka Peace Support Project II funded the production and nationwide broadcast of the highly acclaimed *Take This Road* teledrama (13 half-hour episodes) as well as both Video CD (VCD) and DVD versions of the teledrama, produced by Young Asia Television (YA*TV).

Take This Road is a compelling drama series that reflects the hopes and aspirations of all communities in Sri Lanka and highlights the cost of conflict on fragile community relations. Shot on location in Jaffna, the story revolves around three families from the Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim communities. Their paths cross on a trip that was made possible as a result of the opening of the A9 highway connecting Kandy, in the center of the country, to the war-torn city of Jaffna in the north. It is a symbolic journey of discovery for all three families and the realization of the common human experience that binds them together. The series attempted to facilitate a wider understanding of the complexities of the ethnic conflict and promote the values of mutual understanding, tolerance, and cooperation.



This teledrama has additional qualities that add to its appeal, such as several youth characters and a YA*TV production crew composed mainly of youth under 30 years of age. AED has found that the use of these products is particularly effective when married with complementary activities.

A second series of the *Take This Road* teledrama is ready for filming and is expected to be broadcast before the end of September 2005.

“Take This Road is a compelling drama series that reflects the hopes and aspirations of all communities in Sri Lanka and highlights the cost of conflict on fragile community relations.”

AED also uses **Youth Peer Mediator Systems** to create constituencies for peace. Under the USAID-funded Guatemala Conflict Prevention and Resolution Activity, for example, AED provided a grant to the Center for Legal Action on Human Rights (CALDH), Children and Youth Program, for a youth mediator program. CALDH tapped into its existing “Red de Observadores,” a network of youth that had been previously trained as election monitors, and selected 60 participants from the three departments that have the highest incidence of conflict in Guatemala (Sololá, Chimaltenango, and Sacatepéquez). These youth, representative of Guatemala’s different ethnic groups, were trained in conflict analysis, decision-making, negotiation, mediation, and dialogue. The program provided the youth with concrete tools and skills to be able to handle conflict in constructive ways, as well as opportunities to work together and apply what was learned.



THRESHOLD CONDITIONS FOR YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN PEACEMAKING

Development Challenge/ Youth Vulnerability	Desired Condition for Peace-building	AED Tools and Approaches Available
Strong divisions exist between ethnic and religious groups	YOUTH CREATE CONSTITUENCIES FOR PEACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community YouthMapping (CYM) • Cross-conflict dialogue • Leadership training • Peace clubs • Peace media • Peace theater • Peer mediator systems • Social marketing
Entrenched attitudes of intolerance, hatred toward those who are different		



Training Youth for the Workplace

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF AT-RISK YOUTH IN BRAZIL: Integrating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Employability Activities

AED's dot-ORG project, with funding from USAID/Brazil, has developed Programa Para o Futuro (PPF), an innovative and ambitious workforce development program for at-risk youth in Brazil. This program integrated ICT training and employability activities into USAID's existing Youth At Risk program in Brazil. Many of those at risk are young women, and this effort explicitly includes activities to attract at-risk young women into ICT training programs and create opportunities for them to become paid ICT interns in businesses, and to gain employment after completing the program activities.

The project was extremely successful at leveraging multiple partnerships with the private sector, securing donated equipment, software, office space, and staff time and more to support the project and to create linkages with future employers. A key element of the program's success was e-mentoring, which linked each participating youth with a professional from Recife and other parts of Brazil using digital communication tools, including Email and Instant Messaging. About 50 companies participated in the e-mentoring program.

Following the PPF ICT training program, all 42 of the 49 participating youth that already held high school diplomas were enrolled in IBRATEC, a two-year IT degree program. They were given free scholarships for this program, which not only allows them to pursue college degrees in IT, but also makes them eligible for apprenticeship and internship programs.

To date, PPF has a 78 percent employment record (up from 71 percent at the end of the PPF pilot program): 38 out of the 49 youth that completed the program are currently employed. They are working in large international companies, graphic design firms, Web design firms, and painting and



construction companies, among others. Their average salary is 45 percent above the government's minimum salary.

In addition to having jobs, the youth's goals have evolved significantly since completing the PPF program. When asked at a PPF reunion in December 2004, "What are your current challenges and/or goals?" many of the participating youth differentiated between their short-term and their long-term goals. They now see the importance of being in school, even if they are also working. They are also concerned about their growth in the future (e.g., wishing to get a scholarship or wishing to study abroad). Many have already expressed the goal of returning to their communities through volunteer work.



EXAMPLES OF AED PROJECTS AND APPROACHES THAT HELP YOUTH ACQUIRE EMPLOYMENT SKILLS:

Bridge to Employment (BTE)

United States

Focuses on eight economically disadvantaged communities in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Prepares at-risk youth to work in a broad array of health careers by providing them with real world experiences. Planning to go international in 2005, with initial sites under consideration: Ireland, the Netherlands, Mexico, and Brazil.

La Coalición para la Limpieza Activa del Recurso Agua (CLARA)

El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, U.S., and Venezuela

Trains youth in environmental monitoring, problem identification and solution, and environmental advocacy work vis-à-vis local and national governments.

Community Action Investment Project (CAIP)

Ferghana Valley Region

Generates benefits for a broad spectrum of community members, especially youth, in the form of jobs and the achievement of minimum requirements for a decent standard of life. Market-driven workforce skills training for youth ensures the development of human resources capacity at the local level, engaging and developing the confidence and employability of Ferghana Valley youth.

Young Leaders for Peace and Development (YLPD)

Southern Caucasus

Through this program, AED has helped a new generation of young leaders and their trainers gain access to quality programs in English, conflict transformation, computers, NGO management, and small business development. Virtually all of the graduates from the YLPD program have gone on to higher education. A striking 79 percent of graduates say that the

program gave them new and better defined professional and career goals.

Community YouthMapping (CYM)

Egypt, Haiti, South Africa, and U.S.

Serves as an excellent form of job training by building not only job-specific skills, but also increased maturity, discipline, teamwork, enthusiasm, and feelings of pride and self-worth, thereby increasing the likelihood that youth will seek out and find constructive work opportunities in their own communities. Highly customizable strategy that provides opportunities for the development of skills like public speaking, conflict resolution, data collection, data entry, data analysis, oral and written communications, and knowledge of community resources.

Education Quality Improvement Program 3: The Youth Trust Project (Equip 3)

Global

Focuses on developing creative educational and school-to-work strategies, particularly for out-of-school youth.

LearnLink

Benin, Bulgaria, Ghana, and Paraguay

Municipal telecenters used as informal learning facilities where out-of-school youth (including street children and shoe shine boys) can explore various multi-media, interactive CD-ROMs, and the Internet. LearnLink has set up similar telecenters in Ghana, Benin, and Bulgaria.

National Training Institute for Community Work (NTI)

Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, and Palestine

Designs and conducts extensive training for youth workers and NGOs, including an ongoing association with Ford Foundation to work with youth development NGOs.

AED technical approaches to laying the groundwork for peace-building via youth job training and work preparation include:

- **Barefoot Journalism Training**—Makes media accessible to communities by helping youth to operate their own small-scale media endeavors, such as community audio towers (CATs), that build confidence and impart media skills to youth community members (see text box on page 16).
- **Computer Clubhouses**—Collaborative effort between AED and the Intel Corporation to establish three Computer Clubhouses each in Brazil and South Africa, providing creative and safe after-school learning environments where young people from underserved communities work with adult mentors to explore their own ideas, develop skills, and build confidence through the use of technology.



- **Youth Peace Radio Corps**—Training youth from different ethnic backgrounds in peace radio journalism. Each individual radio station can recruit and train a select number of youth in its listening area, with attention to ethnic, gender, and religious diversity. Each team then works to provide regular radio content about community youth who are proactively contributing to conflict mitigation and peace-building.

THRESHOLD CONDITIONS FOR YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN PEACEMAKING

Development Challenge/ Youth Vulnerability	Desired Condition for Peace-building	AED Tools and Approaches Available
Poor opportunities for education	IMPROVED YOUTH ACCESS TO JOB SKILLS TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barefoot journalism training • Community YouthMapping (CYM) • Computer clubhouses • ICT training programs • Leadership development camps • Leadership training programs • Youth peace radio
Unemployment		



Building Youth Confidence and Self-Esteem

COMMUNITY YOUTHMAPPING (CYM)

Community YouthMapping is one of AED's core youth development strategies. To date, approximately 90 localities, several states, and three international sites have conducted or are in the process of conducting CYM with AED's assistance.

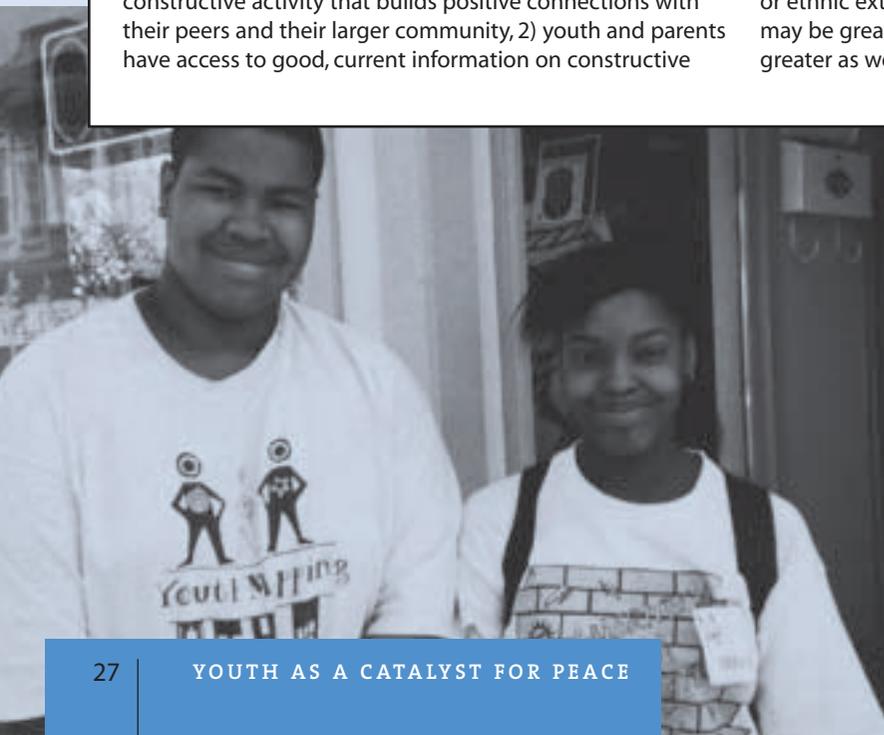
This flexible methodology enables young people to use their eyes and their feet to identify resources for themselves, their families, and their friends. Youth canvass their communities in search of places to go and things to do. CYM activities provide youth with opportunities for meaningful participation and skill development in a community development process, thereby increasing youth incentives to participate in activities designed to manage conflict peacefully. AED has been part of over 35 CYM programs, both domestic and international. The newest such programs are being implemented in Haiti, Egypt, and South Africa.

The direct results of CYM are that 1) youth are employed in a constructive activity that builds positive connections with their peers and their larger community, 2) youth and parents have access to good, current information on constructive

activities in the community, and 3) local decision makers have a more complete picture of what exists and does not exist in a community for young people, and generally make better decisions as a result.

The indirect results of CYM, however, are perhaps even more significant from a peace-building angle. CYM tends to be a life-changing experience for many youth. As they venture out into their communities and make decisions and new connections on their own, youth involved in CYM invariably develop a more positive sense of themselves and their abilities. The skills gained by youth mappers through the process are tools that they take with them wherever they go. Increased self-esteem of youth participants is one of the most critical by-products of AED's CYM activities.

A CYM approach may be used in a variety of settings, including those with groups of at-risk youth (e.g., cities with large populations of new immigrants or areas with religious or ethnic extremism/conflict). While the risks and obstacles may be greater in areas of conflict, the rewards tend to be greater as well.



“Not only did Community YouthMapping give me something productive to do over the summer months, but it opened up so many opportunities and possibilities for me. It gave me more incentive to keep working for my community, especially for youth. I learned what the real world is like. I was able to interact with adults on a one-on-one basis. I improved my communication skills greatly and gained more self-confidence. I learned what is and is not out there for young people.”

—Brenda Robertson,
Community YouthMapper, Columbus, Indiana





EXAMPLE OF AED ACTIVITIES THAT BUILD CONFIDENCE AND POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM AMONG YOUTH:

Boys Reaching Out (BRO) and Girls Leading Our World (GLOW)

Armenia

Leadership training with an emphasis on youth participants' perceptions of their own characteristics and how these can be used to build and lead a team.

Media-Smart Youth

United States



A multi-year media literacy initiative to encourage young people to become more aware of the role media play in shaping their values about nutrition and physical activity, and to help them build skills

that encourage critical thinking, healthy lifestyle choices, and informed decision-making. Youth participants leave the project with a more positive self-identity, resulting from being challenged and from the time spent thinking about ways to improve their health and lifestyle.

Young Leaders for Peace and Development (YLPD)

Southern Caucasus

Developed leadership skills and potential among Abkhaz and Georgian youth; rebuilt a strong sense of self-respect and self-esteem among those youth. When asked what the YLPD program did for them, most YLPD youth say that it gave them belief in themselves and hope for a better future.

“I understand that there are no unresolvable problems—you simply have to break the big problem into small pieces and try to resolve them piece by piece. This means that, to achieve your goals, you have to develop a strategy first and then act accordingly. It seems very simple and logical, but at times it is difficult to implement. The camp experience helped me to be patient, be optimistic, hope and believe that each positive outcome is a result of hard work and love towards what I am doing.”

—Katarine Malintsyan, GLOW Alumnus and Founder of the Business Development NGO, Armenia



RELEVANT AED STUDIES AND RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

In addition to direct youth programming, AED has completed several research studies that support, measure, and analyze the threshold conditions for youth peacebuilding described in this brochure. These include:

Afterschool.org/Promising Practices in Afterschool System—This system, funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and launched in 2003, aims to collect, identify, and disseminate promising practices in afterschool programs in the U.S. It provides a lens through which practitioners can better understand the promising practices that lead to positive outcomes for children and youth. For further information, see <http://www.afterschool.org/>.

BEST Strengthens Youth Worker Practice—An impact study of Building Exemplary Systems for Training Youth Workers (BEST), an AED project designed to increase training and education resources for youth workers in local communities in the U.S. since 1996. This publication is available at www.aed.org/Youth/US.

Sports as a Hook—A study of developmentally focused youth sports (DYS) programs and the organizations that support them in the U.S. One of the findings of this study is that DYS provide youth a forum to learn about and celebrate cultural diversity. This publication is available at www.aed.org/Youth/US.

Youth Capacity Initiative Evaluation—This initiative focuses on the capacity-building of 14 organizations funded to work with U.S. youth who are disconnected from family, school, and employment, and other essential supports.

THRESHOLD CONDITIONS FOR YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN PEACEMAKING

Development Challenge/ Youth Vulnerability	Desired Condition for Peace-building	AED Tools and Approaches Available
<p>Youth have poor self-esteem and are vulnerable to short-term rewards</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">IMPROVED YOUTH SELF-IMAGE AND BOOSTED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barefoot journalism training • Community YouthMapping (CYM) • Computer clubhouses • ICT training programs • Leadership development camps • Leadership training programs • Youth peace radio

Lessons Learned



1. Most AED youth programs have generated a flood of innovation, creativity, and **energy** on the part of youth participants. AED has learned that the most successful programs have built in opportunities to take advantage of and build on this energy. Conversely, a failure to channel youth's creativity and energy can build (or reinforce) youth resentments and skepticism.
2. Similarly, AED has found that when youth are directly involved in **designing and implementing their own programs**, they are more likely to "own" and derive meaningful benefits from the programs.
3. Youth programs (including peacebuilding programs) are generally more successful when skill building is combined with **recreational or social activities**.
4. Particularly when they continue to take youth's needs into account, **long-term programs** (six months to one year) tend to be more successful than short-term programs at generating youth commitment to peace and encouraging peace-building behaviors. With the Young Leaders for Peace and Development program, for example, AED found it much more effective to engage the same youth frequently over a course of a year.

5. AED has worked to ensure **gender balance** in programming, including both female and male youth, particularly in conflict and post-conflict environments. Programs such as Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) focus exclusively on female youth, helping them to realize their importance as equal partners in the decisions affecting the future of their community and their country.
6. While education and employment tend to reduce youth involvement in violence, educational opportunities in the absence of work opportunities can also lead to youth violence. It is thus important to design youth training activities with **employment generation and sustainability** in mind. Where possible, AED's programs encourage youth to identify and create their own future work opportunities.
7. Particularly in settings where ethnic or religious cleavages run deep, it is often more effective to bring youth together on completely **neutral ground**. This provides them with the opportunity to face new ideas and approaches with a completely fresh perspective, away from any other social pressures they might experience closer to home.
8. In some of AED's most effective youth peace-building approaches and programs (including Community YouthMapping and Young Leaders for Peace and Development), conflict resolution and peacebuilding have been **implicit, rather than explicit, objectives**. It is generally easier to draw youth into discussions of immediate needs (such as jobs/employment, skills, basic needs) than of principles (such as conflict transformation, peace-building, democracy). The key to an effective program is getting youth from different walks of life together over time with a common objective and positive mentors; the peacebuilding often takes care of itself. *It's about the process.*

AED TOOLKIT FOR YOUTH & PEACEBUILDING

Development Challenge/ Youth Vulnerability	Desired Condition for Peace-building	AED Tools and Approaches Available	AED Project Experience
<p>Youth are disaffected and disenfranchised</p> <p>Youth are skeptical about political system</p> <p>Youth have little knowledge about political system</p>	<p>→</p> <p>YOUTH ENGAGE IN POSITIVE DECISION MAKING AND/OR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Leadership development camps •Leadership training •Peer education •Social marketing •Youth media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •BRO/Armenia •CLARA/Central America •Decisions Project/Poland •GLOW/Armenia •SMARTWork, PASCA, and other AED HIV/AIDS projects •YLPD/Southern Caucasus
<p>Critical community institutions are weak</p> <p>Youth are disconnected from community institutions</p>	<p>→</p> <p>YOUTH FORGE CONNECTIONS WITH LARGER COMMUNITY</p> <p>→</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Barefoot journalism training •Community service programs •Community YouthMapping (CYM) •Peace theater •Sports clubs and programs •Trauma healing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •BRO/Armenia •CAIP/Central Asia •Community Peace Building and Development Project/Liberia •CYM projects/Egypt, Haiti, South Africa, U.S. •Decisions Project/Poland •EQUIP 3/Global •GLOW/Armenia •National Service-Learning Partnership/U.S. •YLPD/Southern Caucasus
<p>Strong divisions exist between ethnic and religious groups</p> <p>Entrenched attitudes of intolerance, hatred toward those who are different</p>	<p>→</p> <p>YOUTH CREATE CONSTITUENCIES FOR PEACE</p> <p>→</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Community YouthMapping (CYM) •Cross-conflict dialogue •Leadership training •Peace clubs •Peace media •Peace theater •Peer mediator systems •Social marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Community Peace Building and Development Project/Liberia •CYM projects/Egypt, Haiti, South Africa, U.S. •Guatemala Conflict Prevention and Resolution Project/Guatemala •Sri Lanka Peace Support Project II//Sri Lanka •YLPD/Southern Caucasus

Development Challenge/ Youth Vulnerability	Desired Condition for Peace-building	AED Tools and Approaches Available	AED Project Experience
<p>Poor opportunities for education</p> <hr/> <p>Unemployment</p>	<p>→</p> <p>IMPROVED YOUTH ACCESS TO JOB SKILLS TRAINING</p> <p>→</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Barefoot journalism training •Community YouthMapping (CYM) •Computer clubhouses •ICT training programs •Leadership development camps •Leadership training programs •Youth peace radio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Bridge-to-Employment (BTE)/U.S. •BRO/Armenia •CAIP/Central Asia •CYM Projects/Egypt, Haiti, South Africa, U.S. •dot-ORG/Global •EQUIP 3/Global •GLOW/Armenia •YLPD/Southern Caucasus
<p>Youth have poor self-esteem and are vulnerable to short-term rewards</p>	<p>→</p> <p>IMPROVED YOUTH SELF-IMAGE AND BOOSTED CONFIDENCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Barefoot journalism training •Community YouthMapping •Computer clubhouses •ICT training programs •Leadership development camps •Leadership training programs •Youth peace radio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Bridge-to-Employment (BTE)/U.S. •CAIP/Central Asia •CLARA/Central America •CYM Projects/Egypt, Haiti, South Africa, U.S. •dot-ORG/Global •EQUIP 3/Global •YLPD/Southern Caucasus

AED PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION

Boys Reaching Out (BRO)—Armenia
Center for International Training
<http://cit.aed.org/>

Bridge to Employment (BTE)—U.S., Puerto Rico
www.bridge2employment.org

Coalition for the Active Clean-up of Water Resources (CLARA)—El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, U.S., Venezuela
<http://clara.ciceana.org.mx/>

Community Action Investment Program (CAIP)—
Ferghana Valley Region, Central Asia
Center for International Training
<http://cit.aed.org/>

Community YouthMapping (CYM)—
Egypt, Haiti, South Africa, U.S.
www.communityyouthmapping.org

Community Peace Building and Development Project—Liberia
Center for Civil Society and Governance
www.aed-ccsg.org

Decisions (Decyzje) Project—Poland
Center for Civil Society and Governance
www.aed-ccsg.org

Dot-ORG—Global
<http://www.dot-com-alliance.org>

**Education Quality Improvement Program 3:
The Youth Trust Project (EQUIP 3)**—Global
Global Education Center
<http://gec.aed.org>

Girls Leading Our World (GLOW)—Armenia
Center for International Training
<http://cit.aed.org>

LearnLink—Benin, Bulgaria, Ghana, Paraguay
<http://learnlink.aed.org/>

Media-Smart Youth—U.S.
To order copies, contact
NICHDInformationResourceCenter@mail.nih.gov

National School-to-Work (STW) Learning and Information Center—U.S.
<http://niwl.org/>

National Service-Learning Partnership—U.S.
www.service-learningpartnership.org

Proyecto Acción SIDA de Centroamérica (PASCA)—
El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama
www.pasca.org

SMARTWork—Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nigeria,
Ukraine, Vietnam, Zimbabwe
www.smartwork.org

Sri Lanka Peace Support Project—Sri Lanka
Center for Civil Society and Governance
www.aed-ccsg.org

Young Leaders for Peace and Development (YLPD)—
Southern Caucasus
Center for International Training
<http://cit.aed.org/>

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Center for Civil Society
and Governance

AED Center for Civil Society and Governance (CCSG) is committed to building the capacity of civil society organizations to affect public policy and address local, national, and regional issues. CCSG particular areas of focus include strengthening civil society as a sector, promoting peace building, and protecting human rights.



Academy for Educational Development
Connecting People > Creating Change

**For additional information on youth and
peacebuilding programs at AED, please contact:**

Lisa Peterson

AED Center for Civil Society and Governance

Academy for Educational Development

1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20009

Fax: (202) 884-8442

Email: lpeterson@aed.org

AED web site: www.aed.org

Founded in 1961, AED is one of the world's foremost human and social development organizations. Independent and non-profit, AED is committed to solving critical social problems through education, research, training, and social marketing. Major areas of focus include health, education, youth development, the environment, and leadership development.