

# COLORS OF CONNECTION

Awakening capabilities through creative expression



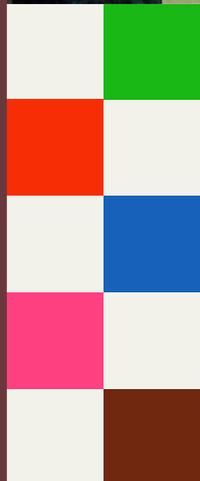
## Who We Are

At a time when conflict and crisis have increased in intensity and scale around the globe, there is a need for innovative solutions to help people to heal and rebuild their lives. Investing in the psychosocial wellbeing of those who have experienced conflict is a crucial component of restoring societies, yet it is often overlooked. We are a non-profit organization pioneering the innovative work of arts-based programming for youth and communities in areas affected by conflict.

**Mission:** We engage conflict-affected youth and communities worldwide in collaborative art-making to nurture hope, cultivate well-being, and promote self-determination.

Through a collaborative-mural making process, we invest in building knowledge, skill sets and resources that strengthen people's mental and emotional capacities, and allow them to move beyond the mindset of basic survival brought on by living through conflict.

**Vision:** We envision a peaceful world in which everyone's capabilities are awakened through creative engagement and put into action to benefit themselves, their communities, and others.





**1. Provide tools to create solution-oriented art:** We create a platform for adolescents and community leaders to represent issues and values that are important to them.

**2. Facilitate opportunities for healing, relationship-building and knowledge-building:** We create safe relational spaces for emotional expression and creativity.



## What We Do



**3. Build community:** We facilitate discussion with a range of societal actors which allows them to communicate and connect around shared values, responsibilities and interests.

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*“Colors of Connection is doing important work with adolescent girls and young women in conflict-affected communities, such as in the DRC, by providing safe spaces and supportive environments in which young women can build self-confidence and leadership skills as well as expand peer networks by developing their own artistic skills and collaborating with other young women on a community-based art project of their own making and design.”*

*- Elizabeth Graybill  
Former Women's Protection and Empowerment Program Staff, International Rescue Committee - DRC, and Partner for the Courage in Congo Project.*

## How We Do It



Our projects train groups of 30 to 40 conflict-affected youth over a period of 4 to 6 months during which they learn new skills in painting and drawing, participate in activities designed to encourage reflection and emotional expression, build knowledge around important issues in the community, and engage in relationship-building activities.



The projects culminate in the collaborative creation of public murals to portray community-based solutions to local concerns using positive imagery.



All projects receive regular input from local leaders who form a community arts council.



## Why We Engage Through Art

Since the beginning of human existence art has been used as a form of personal and collective expression. It is a primal skill enabling us to express ourselves and connect to others in ways that surpass cultural, linguistic and even psychological barriers. Investment in art, at its core, is investment in people and the larger scale health of the society. One cannot have thriving societies without nurturing its hearts and minds. A growing body of research now confirms that art has the power to effectuate:

- Holistic healing
- Expression and communication
- Personal and community agency
- Relationship-building
- Deeper thought and reflexivity





**“What I want to show to people is the future, what I will have and what I will be. Everything that I paint relates to that.”**

- Adolescent Girl Participant of the Courage in Congo Project, Goma, DRC

## Our Impact

CC has successfully completed seven projects located in refugee camps and post-war areas in Sub-Saharan Africa directly benefiting 205 young people, and reaching an estimated 200,000 residents through a public mural-making process. Our projects have addressed the important issues of sexual violence, health promotion, peaceful cohabitation between ethnic groups, education for girls, and human rights.

### Our projects result in increased:

- **Representation:** People advocate for themselves and others
- **Solidarity:** People feel connected to others and that they belong to something larger through shared values, responsibilities and interests
- **Equality:** People’s behaviors reflect a greater belief in the equality of all people
- **Social capital and competence:** People are able to build and manage relationships and social situations in constructive ways
- **Healing:** People process and represent their emotions and thoughts and reconnect with their bodies
- **Self-efficacy:** People are more resilient, motivated to effect change, and able to

## Find Out More

To find out more connect with us at:

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**Colors of Connection**

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