

# COLORS OF CONNECTION



## Who We Are

We at **Colors of Connection** are artists, educators, researchers and human service professionals who are dedicated to giving voice and bringing healing and development through art to marginalized communities world-wide. Established in 2010, **Colors of Connection** is the vision of two women, Laurie Reyman and Christina Mallie, who dreamed of working with youth through the creation of public art to enable connections between people and communities. Our mission is to nurture hope, cultivate well-being, and promote development in disadvantaged youth and societies worldwide through community-based art. **Colors of Connection** envisions a world where the arts are universally accessible and celebrated.

Over the past five years **Colors of Connection** has successfully executed seven projects: two in Malian refugee camps, one in an Ivorian refugee camp, one at a remote Liberian university, two in a post war town in Liberia and one in Goma, capital of a province in conflict affected Eastern Congo. So far our programs have directly benefited 205 young people, and reached about 100,000 residents in five different communities through public paintings.

[www.colorsofconnection.org](http://www.colorsofconnection.org)

# Art as an Intervention Tool

## We cultivate well-being of individuals and communities by:

- **Healing Trauma:** Engaging in creative activities reconnects a traumatized person to their emotions, thoughts, and their physical body, allowing them to reframe the trauma and approach it in a less rigid way.
- **Providing age-appropriate mediums for emotional expression:** Creating art allows for easier expression of emotions by creating a safe and private space and helps an individual to define or refine their values while processing those emotions.
- **Building motivation, self-efficacy, and self-esteem:** Youth who participate in projects are required to take an active role in the process, which enhances their sense of self and their belief in their ability to direct their lives.
- **Providing a platform and voice for individuals and communities to address issues that are important to them:** Public art allows underdeveloped and disadvantaged communities to collaboratively and creatively disseminate significant ideas within the community itself as well as with the world through technological media.

## We promote the development of youth by:

- **Reducing delinquency in at-risk youth:** Creative activities enable at-risk youth to break out of past negative behavior and gain the chance to interact with the world in a new and positive way, which then positively influences their social interactions.
- **Enhancing youth's ability to work with others and communicate ideas:** Youth who experience the challenges of shyness, anxiety, depression, and anger are able to build positive relationships with peers more easily within the social constructs of a designed program where their artistic expressions and skills provide an alternate way for them to communicate and to gain recognition among their peers.
- **Developing more talents in children:** Arts activities engage 75% of measurable talents such as interpersonal skills, problem-solving, and making associations. In contrast, standard education only utilizes ten-to-fifteen of these talents.
- **Engaging all cognitive and mental processes:** The arts engage and stimulate all nineteen different cognitive processes as defined by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning, including memory, comprehension, application of ideas, creativity, analysis, and evaluation.
- **Promoting civic engagement:** Through their participation in creating public arts, youth become engaged in improving their community, which creates a feeling of belonging and ownership of one's community and thus promotes further civic engagement.