



100 Projects for Peace/Vassar College Recipients

2020 recipient:

Awarded to Lauryn Onyore '23
For the project entitled:
"Usafi Kijijini Ogada"- Proper sanitation in Ogada Village

Lauryn will be working in her home Ogada, a small Kenyan rural village which straddles the border between two of Kenya's less-populated counties. In her words, " I want to bring 13 toilets to public locations in Ogada and I want to educate the youth and community members about the adverse effects of human pollution. This project will impact the lives of around 150 school going children and around 120 adults in the village. This is technically my whole village. As a result, we will be saved from communicable water-borne diseases. Moreover, fishing becomes a healthier activity, leads to better income and nutrition by the villagers, and leads to further development. The solution to these problems needs to be sustainable and sanitation education is crucial to the long-term sustainability of this project. Thus, I plan to develop a weekly sanitation education program for the community. When I leave, we will elect "Youth Sanitation Ambassadors" to continue these meetings."

..."I expect this project to reduce sanitation-related diseases, to improve the local economy dependent on clean water, and to improve the daily lives and living standards of all villagers. The project will also bring some short-term employment to locals in constructing the toilets, promote a sense of community and will leave a lasting belief that through education, Ogada can solve its own problems.

The project will be sustainable because we will build long-lasting toilets, we will have an education program to enhance maintenance of the toilets and to increase awareness of the need for proper sanitation. With the proper continuing education and Youth Sanitation Ambassadors in place, the villagers will remember to conserve the environment and the River Migori will once again become a reliable source of livelihood."

2019 recipient:

Awarded to Carlos Espina '21
For his project entitled:
Football for the Future

Carlos will be working in Bryan/College Station, Texas, along with Football for Future, a volunteer-run non-profit organization founded by him that, through free co-ed summer soccer camps, provides youth in the Bryan/College Station area the opportunity to play soccer over the summer, regardless of their family income or background.

As the most popular sport in the world and renowned for being 'the people's game', soccer has the ability to change lives and bring communities together in a way that very few other things can. For many, soccer is a passion that leaves a positive impact on their lives, as it is a way to make friends and forget about problems, provide a healthy alternative to crime, drugs, and other things that destroy lives, and teaches us values such as dedication, camaraderie, and humility. Most importantly, for millions of people all over the world, soccer provides a source of joy and hope, even in difficult times. Thus, we should view soccer as not only a sport but as a tool that, if managed correctly, can create positive change in the world. However, for soccer to have a real impact, it must be accessible to all communities, including the ones that are most vulnerable.

While lack of access to soccer is an issue, it is not the only one facing the community and the demographic that Football for the Future serves. Given that almost all the participants are low-income youth, they also struggle with access to education, especially in the summer. For this reason, he will expand the services of Football for the Future to include an educational aspect with various components. The goal of this initiative is to encourage the volunteers to work hard and inspire them to pursue higher education.

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2018 recipient:

Awarded to Alexandra Sams '18

For her project entitled:

Advancing Voices of Ladakhi Youth through Media Literacy and Film – Documentation for Peace

Alexandra will be working in India along with Local Futures, an international organization that promotes economic localization and indigenous cultural resilience. Local Futures has been working in Ladakh for over forty years to foster in-depth intercultural dialogue and debate – amongst Ladakhis, non-Ladakhi Indians, and foreigners – about the negative effects of globalization and development.

Local Futures plans to conduct a 'media literacy' workshop this summer, in partnership with other local organizations including Flowering Dharma, a student-run organization focused on spiritual education and cultural preservation, and the Ladakh Arts and Media Organization (LAMO), which is dedicated to building an alternative, locally-rooted arts and media community in Ladakh.

The trajectory of this project is to follow up Local Futures' media literacy workshop with a filmmaking intensive for a group of interested Ladakhi youth. We will encourage participating youth to communicate how they view the intrusion of corporate media and screen culture into their lives. The participants will produce independent short films of two to ten minutes, individually or in groups, exploring different aspects of the issue. The films will be presented at a small film festival, which will feature group discussions intended to create analytical dialogue around corporate media and screen culture, and which will kick off a series of screenings at schools and universities throughout Ladakh (and possibly other parts of India).

2017 recipient:

Andrew Eslich '17

For his project entitled:

Empowering Youth through Mentorship

Andrew will be working in the areas of Dover and New Philadelphia with the local non-profit organization Latino Cultural Connections (LCC) and several Latinx students this summer to develop and implement a mentoring program that will serve middle school and high school Latinx students. Based on the needs and desires of the students, the summer long program will focus on two main goals: empowerment and development of one's voice, and bridging the knowledge and cultural gap between Latinx and non-Latinx communities. The program will serve four groups of students: middle school girls, middle school boys, high school girls, and high school boys, each of 5-10 students. Given these groups, the program will be tailored to the desires of each group.

This project seeks to empower by providing a safe space, going on field trips to both academic and recreational sites, bringing in guest speakers, and participating in literary and art workshops. The goal is to provide a safe and welcoming space for Latinx youth to continue to develop their voice and collectively implement and develop projects that will create greater understandings in the area.

2016 recipient:

Shania Harford '17

For her project entitled:

Transformative Summer Reading Academy

Transformative Summer Reading Academy is a two-month academic enrichment opportunity for elementary school students in Philadelphia. The goal of this academy is to increase students' reading and writing proficiency levels using a unique culturally relevant curriculum. It is designed to replace 2-month reading loss with 2-month reading gain among disadvantaged Black and Latino students in Philadelphia. This model differs from typical summer schools because of its community building activities, culturally relevant books and discussions, and mixed-age collaboration. TSRA will create a nurturing, humanizing environment that promotes and normalizes reading culture among the young scholars. This academy breaks away from conventional summer school programs to provide an exciting summer full of literacy learning catered to the needs of Black and Latino students.

My goal is to increase literacy learning by building a strong reading culture among elementary and high school students. It is imperative that students continue to read even after summer 2016 to prevent reading loss. In order to keep reading culture alive, all of the books, art supplies, and other materials will remain in Thomas M. Peirce elementary school's resource center where all students will have access. The tutors, rising juniors and seniors, with support from Commissioner Simms, will be able to keep TSRA running in the summer of 2017. The academy can continue under the leadership of experienced tutors.

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2015 recipient:

Sahara Pradhan '15 For her project entitled "Ghar Jaun (Let's go home)"

"Nepal has a youth unemployment rate of 38% with over 2000 young people leaving the country everyday for work as unskilled migrant laborers, only to face harsh working conditions and exploitation. They are almost always deceived, and too often face abuse and even death. ...

"Ghar Jaun" ("Let's go home") is bridging this gap—giving young people a chance to live, work and prosper in their own communities. This project is a professional development internship program for unemployed youth, who would otherwise be driven away from home as migrant laborers. The program will empower these young people and provide them with successful entry into the local workforce as young professionals.

The project will take place in partnership with Socio-Economic Welfare Center for Energetic Women (EWC), a thriving grassroots NGO.

Through an application process, we will select 15 interns to work at EWC who have: completed high school, are 18-23 years old, are socially and economically disadvantaged, and show dedication to professional, personal growth and social change.

The project documents, planning/coordination details, and outcome reports will serve as a model of a successful pilot program for EWC, which EWC will present to current and potential donors to create an annual program."

2014 recipient:

Julianna Shinnick '14 For her project entitled "Creating Peace for People with Epilepsy"

"In Tanzania, you may recognize people with epilepsy by large burns across their bodies or by the way they are segregated within their community, unable to find work due to their disability.

With the funds from the Davis Projects for Peace Fellowship, I will create an art program for the patients of the Mahenge clinic. The project will be three-pronged. First, the program will be therapeutic for the patients, many of whom are trauma survivors and are ostracized from their communities... Second, the content of several art projects will raise awareness about the realities of epilepsy within the community. Many of the problems that patients face are due to lack of awareness... Third, I will work with patients to sell their crafts in a micro-finance project. One of the central problems for the patients of the Mahenge is that others believe they are unfit to work. People with epilepsy are subsequently much poorer than others in the community and often suffer from lack of plumbing and other basic necessities. The clinic has recently completed the first stage of a pilot program that taught patients to farm and successfully led them to jobs in the village. Working with the

leaders of that program and collaborating with local artisans, I will help organize the selling of patients' crafts. The Mahenge Clinic has reported increased self-esteem, increased integration into the community, and improved living conditions in patients who completed the farming project. I hope that this program will bring similar benefits associated with employment, especially to women in the community who face further discrimination."

2013 recipients:

Emma Redden and Jeffrey From '15 For their project entitled "Peace Bound: Portraits for Non-Violence"

"Our objective is to employ the universal language of visual art to illustrate solidarity with victims of domestic violence with the intention of reducing their feelings of isolation. Although we will undoubtedly collaborate with people who have personal experience with domestic violence, our objective is not to seek out victims, but rather to offer the general public as well as employees at domestic violence service centers (DVCS) the opportunity to speak out publicly against this violent social epidemic."

"We will drive across the United States and stop at pre-determined cities and towns to speak with people who work with victims of domestic violence as well as ordinary citizens. Traveling to all parts of the United States provides geographic diversity that is integral to the success of our project. Domestic violence is an issue that spans racial-ethnic, socio-economic, geographic, and age boundaries and it is important that our product reflects the social diversity that this problem affects..."

"Traveling by car, we will take the portraits with black and white film and have the film developed along the way. We will bring a scanner to scan the sheets with people's answers and use Photoshop to overlay the images. We will stop at libraries and Wi-fi locations to upload to the blog. We will have each participant sign a Human Subjects Consent Form, which we will obtain from Vassar College. We will have the books bound at a local Poughkeepsie press."

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2012 recipient:

Ethan Buckner '13
For his project entitled
"Summer of Solutions Oakland"

"The Summer of Solutions Oakland (SoS) is a transformational leadership summer program for young people from Oakland and around the country. Hosted by the Non-Profit Organization Grand Aspirations SoS Oakland empowers young people to fully embody their potential to create thriving, just and sustainable communities. In the fall of 2010, I co-founded SoS Oakland with Mary Shindler (James Madison University '10), and together we coordinated our first program in the summer of 2011.

... Our impact was powerful. We organized, designed curriculum, and operated a summer camp focused on history, leadership, and community for over 40 children from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds from Fruitvale in partnership with the Peralta Hacienda Historical Park. We helped Solar Mosaic launch Oakland's first community-funded solar project. We laid groundwork for a community urban farm in West Oakland. We conducted comprehensive energy audits on a number of homes in Fruitvale, and began to develop a model for a community energy efficiency cooperative. We filmed hundreds of hours and began producing a new documentary telling the story of community solutions work in Oakland. Through it all, our participants built skills as community organizers, activists, peace builders, entrepreneurs, artists, and visionaries."

Building on his success last summer as a Burnam Fellow, Ethan hopes to implement creative initiatives that advance social justice, equity, sustainability, and peace in Fruitvale. Focusing on two core interconnected projects, SoS fellows will work in conjunction with Cantic Farm to launch the emerging Non-Violence Lab, a youth hub for restorative justice and peacebuilding in Fruitvale, and work with Peralta Hacienda Historical Park to organize and operate the free summer camp for area families that our fellows launched last year.

2011 recipient:

Rokuhei Fukui '12
For his project entitled
"Documenting the Abuse of Migrant Workers in Singapore"

"Singapore became a major receiving country of foreign labor since the late 1970s and migrant workers are now an integral part of the nation's economy. However, the Singaporean government has systematically excluded migrant workers of rights that are made available to its citizens, thus, exploitation is rife... using Google Maps, I will go further to document the cases of abuse on an interactive map of Singapore I will publish pamphlets, posters and articles of the cases of mistreatment. This map will be made available to contractors, who hire migrant laborers from employment agencies, therefore holding companies accountable for the treatment of their foreign labor. It will put pressure both on companies to stop the abuse, and on

corporations to deal only with companies that treat migrant workers fairly, with dignity and respect. The demand for this project has already been expressed by both TWC2 and government institutions, as these organizations desire to hold companies accountable for the exploitation of workers and raise the living standards of laborers in Singapore."

Working with TWC2, a registered NGO in Singapore, Roku hopes to organize a free meal program for migrant workers who have faced exploitation and abuse and bring together migrant workers, activists and civil society members to further document the cases of abuse.

2010 recipient:

Trang Nguyen '12
For her project entitled
"Children and the Living Environment by the Red River"

"Phuc Xa ward of Ba Dinh district (Hanoi) is located by the dyke of the Red River, the major river of the Northern Delta of Vietnam (widely known as the Red River Delta) flowing to the South China Sea. Riverside residents and "fishing" villagers rarely find permanent employment, constantly use untreated water (including river water) and have their "houses" surrounded by their own garbage whose rotten smell pervades the air. Most of the children here cannot afford schooling, many become retarded due to malnutrition... May 19th Shelter of the Ba Dinh District People's Committee, established in 1993, is a model of self-mobilization that aims to nurture and educate orphans, homeless children and children living under the poverty line locally"

Trang's hope is to to enhance the shelter's facilities, resume certain long "extinct" activities and gather public attention for the May 19th Shelter.

2009 recipient:

Maria Mendez '10
For her project entitled
"A Fountain of Peace"

"In close consultation with the 16 members of the village council of El Ciruelo and some specialized labor for water projects we decided that a 10-meter deep well, a 10,000-gallon water tank at the top of a hill in the village, a water pump and a piping system will be necessary to complement the function of the already-existing well. This will ensure a sustainable delivery of clean and safe water to every house in the village. ...The project will be integrated with an educational campaign on water conservation to ensure that the benefits of safe water continue for many years to come."

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2008 recipients:

Rachel Lee, '08 and Danielle Morvant, '10

For their project entitled

"Building New Mythology: Theater for Peace in New Orleans"

"Through a series of workshops with young women in New Orleans we will use drama and storytelling techniques first to explore how mythology functions within communities, and then to generate new, positive mythologies about home and neighborhood. The project will involve youth from different neighborhoods in an artistic partnership, and will culminate in a final performance that brings together members of the wider New Orleans community for entertainment, celebration and discussion."