

Spotlight: Musicians without Borders

Description

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[As you may know](#), my *profession* (as of this writing) is web development and my *passion* is music. (This, of course, is an oversimplification, but it [maps neatly to this Venn diagram](#).) It's time to take a look at something music-related that also relates to [OURED](#)'s work in international development.

[One of the teachers](#) of the week-long [workshop I attend](#) each summer is active in the organization [Musicians without Borders](#) (MwB). As it says on their website, they are a “global network organization using the power of music for healing and reconciliation in areas torn by war and conflict.” I've [written before](#) about [the science behind music's power](#) to build social connections between people, so I have no surprise that someone should try to use it in this way. But to use music to build toward such an audacious goal as “world peace” is, to me, a bold and inspiring enterprise.

It works a little bit differently in each of the places where the organization works, but there are commonalities between them. They appear to be building a toolbox of models, methodologies, and trainings in hopes of being able to use them in situations that arise in other geographic regions. (This, incidentally, sounds a lot like the way the two Innovation Labs we manage—[IPM](#), [SANREM](#)—work, to me.)

- Their *Palestine Community Music* project works in Palestine to develop nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution.
- *Mitrovica Rock School* in the city of Mitrovica, Kosovo (in Serbia) teaches music to young people from both sides of the bitter Serbian/Albanian ethnic divide.
- Their *Music Bridge* project works in Northern Ireland to overcome the social and political boundaries between different groups there.
- *Tanzania Youth Music*, in the Moshi District of Tanzania close to Kilimanjaro, is strengthening the capacity of community-based organizations.
- Their *Stone Flowers* project in north-west England is helping to rehabilitate torture survivors.
- The *From Woman to Woman* project in Tuzla Canton, Bosnia and Herzegovina helps rehabilitate the women survivors of the 1995 genocide.
- Finally, their *Rwanda Youth Music* project works in Rwanda to reach out to youth suffering from a variety of hardships.

There are so many ways to make a difference in the world, and one might legitimately argue that initiatives such as [Doctors without Borders](#) and [USAID-funded development projects](#) address much more concrete and critical needs. But music *is* a force, and a powerful one, and Musicians without Borders is using that power to mend rifts between people and heal the scars left by conflict around the world.

Something that, I hope you'll agree, fits squarely in the “that which the world needs” bubble on the

above-referenced Venn diagram.

Category

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Author

amado

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