



# Keys of Change usa

Can music change the world? We believe it can.

## Three NEW projects

### Serbian Sounds - Belgrade

Our newest musical education project is in Serbia. Keys of Change USA is providing music lessons to 95 children living in Serbia facing particular life challenging situations. Learning music not only enhances their emotional connectivity, but will improve their self-expression, and contribute to each child's healing process.

Keys of Change USA initially contacted several organisations operating in Serbia to assess the possibility of starting a musical education programme involving vulnerable children and young people. After conducting assessment visits, we concluded that it would be of great value to start music education programmes with the children under the care of five children's homes in and around Belgrade. Each supervising organisation selected approximately

20 students, based on an assessment of who would benefit most from the music lessons, and would also show a regular commitment to the activities. The priority, when selecting students to participate in the programme, ideally of elementary or middle school age, was placed on their willingness to use music as a tool of self-improvement, and a willingness to support and help others through music.

At each location, we are organising weekly music classes that are focused on singing (individual and choir), music appreciation, rhythmic games and percussion playing. Further down the line, individual lessons will also be offered to students either who are very keen or who need extra support.

The classes are taught by Serbian violin teacher Ana who has experience of teaching children at risk from frequently violent and abusive backgrounds, while the overall programme is supervised Keys of Change USA associate Zach, currently based in Greece.



### La Banda de la Musica - Oaxaca, Mexico

Incredible musical things are taking place in the dusty barrio of Vicente Guerrero, on the outskirts of Oaxaca, Mexico. In 2011, young people facing incredible difficulties, including drugs, violence and poverty, decided they needed an outlet in their daily lives to help them escape this hard reality of life in their barrio. They chose music, formed the Banda de la Musica and, with the help of a local music teacher, set up a music school. Apart from the opportunities and safety this created for young people in Vicente Guerrero, this was a deeply symbolic gesture, as the landfill of Oaxaca lies next to this community: while Oaxaca would bring their garbage to Vicente Guerrero, the young people of the community would give back music. Six years after its formation, and with significant positive results for the young

people participating in this musical programme, in 2017 Keys of Change USA decided to support the desire of these young musicians to create something beautiful in the face of all adversity. La Banda de la Musica has now developed into a youth symphony orchestra, the Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil Santa Cecilia, which has become a shining example of how music can improve the lives of children coming from some of the toughest backgrounds.

Starting in 2018, Keys of Change USA will be sending musicians from its network, starting with pianist and Keys of Change founder Panos Karan, to provide musical guidance and inspiration and organise musical activities. These activities will aim to strengthen the self-confidence and personal identities of young people facing an extraordinary situation in life,

and will enable them to grow and face with hope, courage and confidence the challenges of their daily lives. The core of this programme is self-expression and personal improvement through music.



### South American Rhythms - Ecuador

In Quito, high in the Andes and known for its beautiful historic centre and its delicious chocolate, many children face the harsh reality of poverty, domestic violence, and the effects of drugs in their community. In one of the most notorious districts of Quito, an organisation called Honrar la Vida is keeping children off the streets by providing not only primary and secondary education, but shelter, emotional support and tools to deal with the traumatic experiences many face. Keys of Change USA visited Quito in 2017 and our founder Panos Karan met the children of Honrar la Vida. It is remarkable how children who might have seen some of the worst situations in life, are full of positive energy and want to share beautiful things with others. Keys of Change USA decided that this is an ideal place to provide inspiration through music, and give a chance to

these children to express themselves with sounds.

During the summer of 2017 Keys of Change USA helped organise a summer music camp, by providing daily music lessons for more than 100 children. Given the hardships many of these children face, trust and collaboration with others is often lacking. The camp more than anything was therefore an opportunity for these children to use music, singing and sounds to work closely with others, and encourage trust and enthusiasm for creating something jointly. At the very least, the camp worked as an important excuse for the children to stay off the streets during the summer holidays.

The tremendous success of the summer music camp led Keys of Change USA to decide to continue offering music and dance classes to

the children at Honrar la Vida throughout the academic year, helping them continue building on some of the most important lessons that will follow them throughout their lives: collaboration, trust and hope.

