

**Location**

US

**Users**

Inhabitants of Williamsburg

**Maintained by**

Aetna Foundation— Help Portrait, Andy Harris (through BNY Wealth Management), Brooklyn Community Foundation, Coca-Cola Company (Fitness Program), Environmental Protection Agency, Green Jobs Green NY—NYSERDA, Hispanic Federation- Aetna Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)—Community Arts, New York Community Trust, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), NYC Department of Education - Academy for IAP, NYC Department of Youth & Community Development, NYS Council for the Arts, NYS Dept. of Education - 21st Century, NYS Dept. of Health - Health Research Aids Institute, NYS Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), Rockefeller Family Fund, Rockefeller NYC Cultural Innovation Fund, The Scherman Foundation, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, William B. Weiner Foundation, Winslow Foundation, Youth Development Institute (YDI)

**Duration**

1982 - ongoing

**Category**

pedagogical, politics, economy, social

**Nr. and Title**

U 056

# El Puente

**Initiator(s)**

Luis Garden Acosta and Frances Lucerna

**Description**

The project consists of a community human rights institution based in North Brooklyn; it was founded in collaboration with church leaders, artists, educators, health providers and community activists to stop the wave of violence in the neighborhood, which at that time was called the 'teenage gang capital of New York City'. El Puente promotes leadership for peace and justice, integrating both youth and adult oriented projects becoming a pioneer institution, which was taken as a national model for youth development within the context of community development and for its impact on social policy both locally and nationally. El Puente comprehends a Center for Arts and Culture, a Green Light District & Community Wellness Program, four neighborhood Leadership Centers, and the Academy for Peace and Justice public high school. El Puente offers bilingual activities, skill-based programs, mentoring and internships.

**Goals**

Its goal is to promote social justice through direct community engagement in the arts, education, scientific research, and environmental action. It was founded to complete the holistic transformation of North Brooklyn from one of the most challenged neighborhoods in New York City to a more equitable, healthy and green community.

**Beneficial outcomes**

They have improved the life of the community. The Academy for Peace and Justice is one of the NY "A" rated public school with 100% students graduated. In 2003, the Academy was recognized by the Department of Education's Chancellor as one of New York City's 200 Schools of Excellence and remains among NYC's A-rated schools. In 2009, it was recognized for achieving the highest 1 year graduation rate increase among Brooklyn High Schools. The Academy is highlighted in the Eisenhower Foundation report, "What Works: Public School Reform" and is currently part of a Stanford University Study sponsored by Linda Darling Hammond researching best practices in schools focused on social emotional development and social justice. It is also part of the NYC DOE'S Expanded Success Initiative focused on the academic success of Latino and African American male students.

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