

Annual Report

2012-2013



Mission

To create and communicate culturally oriented solutions to the next generation of leaders fighting HIV/AIDS in local communities.

Vision

We envision a network of communities where empowered youth, armed with knowledge and passion, become the leaders of their own HIV prevention revolution. As ambassadors, peer leaders and trainers, the youth become agents of change in their own communities, spreading the message of HIV prevention in their own words, tapping hidden networks and saving lives.

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Transdiaspora Network (TDN) is a New York-based leading human capacity building non-profit organization conducting culturally-oriented HIV prevention and awareness activities. It was founded in response to the lack of HIV prevention activities tailored to young people in Brooklyn, home to the highest rate of HIV infections in New York City and among the highest in the United States. We communicate critical health information and culturally oriented solutions to the next generation of leaders fighting HIV/AIDS.

TDN's holistic and non-lecture method of engaging young people in the conversation about HIV prevention bridges the gap between mainstream approaches to HIV prevention and the needs of peripheral communities that lack culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

TDN's groundbreaking approach combines educational, recreational and therapeutic elements. We conduct workshops, training sessions and seminars, and partner with other community-based organizations to reach a wide array of at-risk teens who would otherwise not have access to critical health information or the opportunity to learn real-life skills to help them make more informed decisions about their health.

MEMBERS

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Mr. Ariel Rojas, MS, MA - President/Founder
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BOLD Initiative Internship

Sheryl Marie Henriquez
Dante Kearse
Bai Xue
Nia Johnson
Chanelle Cintron
La-Kenia Green

Volunteers

Jasmine Knowles, LMSW – Program Manager
Rebecca Brown, LMSW – Program Associate
Carina Alencar, MA – International Development Consultant
Dominique Dupont-Dubois, MPH – Senior Program Associate
Dr. Anil Kabrawala, M.D. – Senior Consulting Physician
Jonathan Zacks – IT & Digital Strategist

Constituents

Our program participants come from a diverse range of ethnic, economic, and cultural backgrounds. Most are from under-resourced communities facing the threat of HIV/AIDS on a daily basis and have limited access to information and services. Many are of Caribbean and African descent, and live in neighborhoods where the HIV infection rate among teenagers is one the highest in the nation. Some are also Muslim and of South East Asian descent. All are adolescents negotiating how their cultural heritage and family traditions interplay with the realities of peer pressure, reproductive health and sexually-transmitted diseases in environments not always conducive to communication and open dialogue.

Bringing a new social meaning to culture and tradition



Ariel Rojas, President/Founder

Current reported HIV seroprevalence rates in Brooklyn are among the highest in the United States and are the highest of New York City's five boroughs. In this context, accelerating large-scale efforts, as well as local efforts for HIV prevention and treatment is imperative.

At TDN, we continue to live our mission by working with underserved communities lacking access to critical health information. Unlike other youth development and public health preventive strategies, our unique approach works in the stages of pre-primary prevention. Our non-lecture model changes youth's behavior and way of thinking which in turn imparts the tools of prevention.

Last year, TDN celebrated our 5 years of making a difference in the community. This great milestone presented the perfect opportunity to reflect on the achievements – some of which you can read about

here -- and lessons learned of the last five years and to make solid plans for what lies ahead. All of our achievements were crowned by the honor of receiving the NYS Health Commissioner's Distinguished Service Award, awarded by the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute. Each year during World AIDS Day, a select number of individuals from around the state of New York are honored for their extraordinary efforts in raising HIV/AIDS awareness within their community and among the general public.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our efforts. You made a difference. I'm looking forward to this coming year with hope and dedication to continue working with local communities and their leaders to eradicate the spread of HIV/AIDS among our most vulnerable youth.

We believe that our youth participants will be the future leaders of the movement against HIV/AIDS, and it is our responsibility to empower them, train them and nurture them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ariel Rojas'.

Ariel Rojas
President & Founder

“Transdiaspora Network provides a judgment-free environment to allow teenagers and young adults from all races to speak freely about prevention, utilizing their language to communicate. It also utilizes others “forms of language” to communicate, including dance mediation, storytelling, and social photography. By using this approach, young people develop the idea that health care and STD prevention is not just ‘black and white,’ ‘right or wrong,’ ‘life or death;’ but rather more lively, dynamic, and personable.”

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Dr. Anil Kabrawala, M.D. | Senior Consultant Physician



SOCIAL EQUITY

Coney Island Hurricane Relief Effort

A few days after Superstorm Sandy struck, our group was one of the few non-profit organizations in New York City to document the social tragedy caused by the hurricane, plan an emergency community outreach, conduct an in-site assessment of Coney Island's devastated area, and to execute a collaborative hurricane disaster relief effort with other nine organizations. In recognition of our comprehensive approach, Citizens Committee for NYC awarded us its Hurricane Relief Grant to amplify our work in Coney Island.

Held on November 10, 2012, our relief effort was a great success: close to one hundred volunteers mobilized to gather, transport and distribute donations of food, clothing, water and relief supplies to more than 400 local residents. The total amount of donations was valued at more than \$10,000. As one of the young volunteers, Lori Dooley, expressed: *"It was both fulfilling and devastating to take part in the Coney Island relief effort... I felt like there wasn't enough I could do, but was happy to be able to do what we could."*

TDN thanks all of our partners and volunteers who participated in this collaborative effort, without whom this effort would not have been possible. To see video footage, [click here](#)



Partners/volunteers bringing donations



Volunteers serving local residents

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Youth Volunteer Day - School Supplies Donation

With the support of Citizens Committee for New York City, we have been able to amplify our response to the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy in Coney Island, where in addition to our immediate response to the devastation caused by the Superstorm back in November 2012, we have planned additional activities and community outreach to address issues of long term resiliency in the community.

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On May 1st, 2013, a group of high school students from Manhattan Business Academy traveled to Abraham Lincoln High School in Coney Island, Brooklyn, bringing donations of school materials, including backpacks, pencils, pencil sharpener, pens, highlight markers, colored pencils, composition notebooks, note cards, pocket folder, etc., for students affected by Sandy. Later in the day, the students attended an interactive educational session at Project Street Beat Mobile Medical Unit provided by the Keith Haring Foundation, where they learned how HIV testing is conducted in the community.



School material donations from Manhattan Business Academy students



Informative session about HIV testing

INNOVATING

RIPPLE Program • BOLD Initiative Internship • Community Tour to Health

Through our pioneering HIV prevention programs -- the RIPPLE program and the BOLD Initiative -- TDN has engaged more than 100 youth in a new kind of dialogue about youth development and public health. Our RIPPLE curriculum combines educational, recreational and therapeutic elements, and the BOLD internship enables high school and college students to conduct research, practice social empowerment, and enhance cultural communication.

TDN has brought the global discussion on HIV/AIDS to a local level, always recognizing the linkages between the local and international levels. In keeping with our innovative approach to health promotion, TDN spearheaded a pilot program called "Tour to Health" which encompasses site visits to significant community organizations, neighborhood clinics and cultural institutions serving local residents and advocating for strong community identity and values. Through these activities, the youth practice community engagement and social advocacy by interacting with local organizations and elected officials and stressing the importance of more inclusive prevention strategies.

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"Transdiaspora Network is hyper-local yet extremely transcendent and progressive in its definition of culture and prevention."

Radha Vij | Associate Director | Gutenberg Communications



Local Community Health Fair

RAISING AWARENESS

Celebrating National Latino AIDS Awareness Day



Panel discussion at Columbia University

On October 13, 2011, TDN partnered with the Latino Caucus at Columbia University School of Social Work (CUSSW) to offer a panel discussion entitled *"HIV/AIDS and Latinos: Dancing from Tradition to Prevention,"* in celebration of Latino AIDS Awareness Day (NLAAD). The panel was rich with experienced and dedicated individuals such as Melissa Ramirez, then NLAAD Director, and Johnny Guaylupo, Housing Works' LGBT Youth Program Coordinator, as well as Dominique Dupont-Dubois, TDN Program Manager, and Franchel Mendoza, CUSSW Latino Caucus representative.

All brought new depth of knowledge for future social workers who will venture into working with the Latino community, as the Latino Caucus attempts to provide CUSSW students with the idea that Latinos are not homogenous. Latinos are individuals with different wants, dreams, and desires that are not necessarily found in research and literature. Transdiaspora Network and panelists provided information on how important it is to use language that caters to adult and young Latinos and how social constructs vary within the Latino community. *"As a social work panelist,"* said Franchel Mendoza, *"I was able to share my knowledge and experience on HIV/AIDS and how it affects the community I live in."*

Commemorating the National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

Black Americans make up just 14% of the U.S. population, yet account for almost half of those living with HIV and dying of AIDS in this country. In honor of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, On February 7th, 2012 Transdiaspora Network partnered with the Brooklyn Public Library to share our groundbreaking approach to prevention. TDN tailored our Dance Mediation and Storytelling Dynamic curriculum module for this particular event for a diverse group of Brooklyn middle and high school students.



Workshop at the Brooklyn Public Library

As Maxine Cooper, Consumer Health Librarian at Brooklyn Public Library, says: *“Transdiaspora Network provides a different approach in getting young people to look at themselves. How they see themselves is very relevant to how they behave as individuals (...) Discussions on self-esteem and interactive methods for self-awareness is a great way to get young people to look at themselves in a more positive light, and to foster and encourage better decision-making in their lives (...) I saw a class discussion, and a separate group of about 8 young men communicating positively in discussions led by Transdiaspora Network... I did witness the ‘art of communication’.”*

Retreat Upstate New York

On April 12th, 2012, TDN organized a retreat for students from Paul Robeson High School in Brooklyn to Vassar College in upstate New York. The day-long trip was meant to create the opportunity for participants to address issues of HIV prevention and homophobia among teenagers in an open environment conducive to open dialogue.

Accompanied by Bailey’s Cafe Executive Director Stefanie Siegel and TDN President/Founder Ariel Rojas, the young students had an opportunity to engage with Vassar students and faculty from different departments and to have insightful conversations around the topics of health and HIV/AIDS, race and higher education. The day’s events also included a talk with Edward Pittman, Associate Dean of the College for Campus Life and Diversity. The retreat was an empowering experience for these students, most of whom had never traveled to Upstate New York.



Storytelling session at Vassar College

“TDN taught me that in life, when you commit to something, you have to follow through on it. It has made me more responsible, my knowledge about HIV has grown, and it has opened my mind a lot.”

TDN program participant, 15 years old

RESEARCH

Community Survey

We interviewed 221 local residents from Central Brooklyn (Brownsville, Crown Heights, Bed-Stuy), in partnership with Columbia Community Outreach and local leaders, to better understand how community members reflect about issues of HIV prevention in their own social context. This is essential to developing new strategies to prevent the spread of HIV and fight its social stigma, reinvigorate our advocacy efforts and create action plans that support more impactful, efficient, sustainable and cost-effective programs.

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55% were interested in learning more about HIV prevention in the future

52% know someone who has HIV/AIDS

31% do not use condoms

16% agreed that birth control pills can prevent HIV transmission



Capacity Building

In the spring of 2012, TDN conducted a month-long capacity-building training for a group of volunteers from Capra Care, who then implemented our HIV prevention curriculum in a rural village in Haiti.

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April 7, 2012

Dear Ariel Rojas:

I am writing to thank you for training CapraCare's four volunteers. The skills gained by our volunteers will be put to great use in Haiti. Our volunteers were transformed by TDN's innovative and creative ways of teaching HIV/AIDS prevention.

Many of the CapraCare volunteers going to Haiti on April 7, 2012, are eager to apply their new acquired skills, to teach Haitians in Fonfrede, Haiti about a new way to learn about HIV/AIDS prevention. They will use the very nature of what they learn from TDN to reach out and attempt to teach young adolescents in Haiti how to form a relationship with their environment. They are planning to do this by simply providing the teens an opportunity to talk.

Our volunteers understand after their training that the best way to teach someone about HIV/AIDS prevention is by confronting the behavior and not the person. Our volunteers reported it is important to let people talk so they can better share and express their awareness of their own risk to HIV/AIDS in their community. Understanding one's feedback, as our volunteers said, is best done through discussions or one on one with an individual who is just sharing their feelings.

In addition, CapraCare would like to thank TDN for the opportunity to learn, providing a supporting environment, and flexibility in making this training a life changing experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jean Pierre-Louis", written in a cursive style.

Jean Pierre-Louis
Executive Director/CEO

TDN CHANGEMAKER AWARDS

The TDN Changemaker Awards honor community leaders who exemplify the spirit of Transdiaspora Network and demonstrate excellence and outstanding achievement in their work with the community. The Awards recognize two innovative individuals or organizations who inspire us; they shine a light on visionaries who are taking the lead in capacity building and youth development in the HIV/AIDS prevention space and providing living examples of the power of dedication and hard work to change the world, one teen at a time.

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2012

Mr. Johnny Guaylupo, LGBT Youth Program Coordinator, Housing Works

Ms. Melissa Faith Ramirez, Director, National Latino AIDS Awareness Day, Latino Commission on AIDS

2013

Ms. Claire Simon, Co-Director/Co-Founder, Young Women of Color HIV/AIDS Coalition

Ms. Aida León, Founder / Executive Director, Amethyst Women's Project



Melissa Ramirez



Johnny Guaylupo



Claire Simon



Aida León

Partners

Strook, Strook & Lavan

B Condoms

Columbia University Virtual Internship Program

Columbia University Social Intervention Group

Columbia Community Outreach

Community Health Network

Counseling in Schools

The City Kids Foundation

Crown Heights Community Mediation Center

Sadie Nash Leadership Project

Center for the Study of Brooklyn

Bailey's Café

Advocates for Youth

We Are All Brooklyn Coalition

Brooklyn Historical Society

KIPP Washington Heights Middle School

Supporters

These supporters generously sustained our work through grants and donations received in TDN's 2012 and 2013 fiscal years. TDN's fiscal year closes on August 31.

Citizen's Committee for New York City (FY 2013)

The Credit Suisse America's Foundation (FY 2012 and 2013)

Gilead Sciences (FY2012)

Frederic Haddad (FY 2012)

Samlyn Capital (FY 2012)

Individual Donors

It is the support of TDN's committed donors that enables us to remain engaged in the field and deliver. We thank those listed below who played a vital role in our success in 2012/2013. Although too numerous to name, we also extend our sincere gratitude to the growing number of socially-conscious individuals and activists who have contributed to TDN and supported our efforts. Each gift adds to our reach and collective strength.

\$100 and over

Linny Fowler

Anonymous

The Gluck Family

Bordon Lai

Lei Meng

Brian Ohl

Virginia Ramsey

Casey Reckman

Celine Soudant

Sebastien Thiebault



In-Kind Supporters

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La Mujer Gala restaurant
The Harlem Quartet
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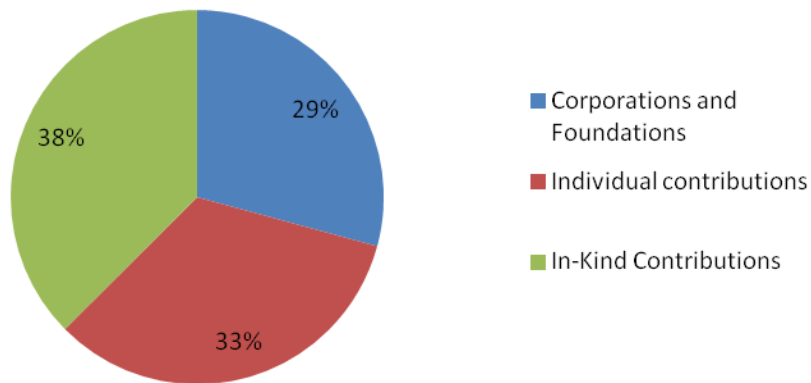


*Part of the
international
movement
walking
towards an
AIDS-free
generation.*

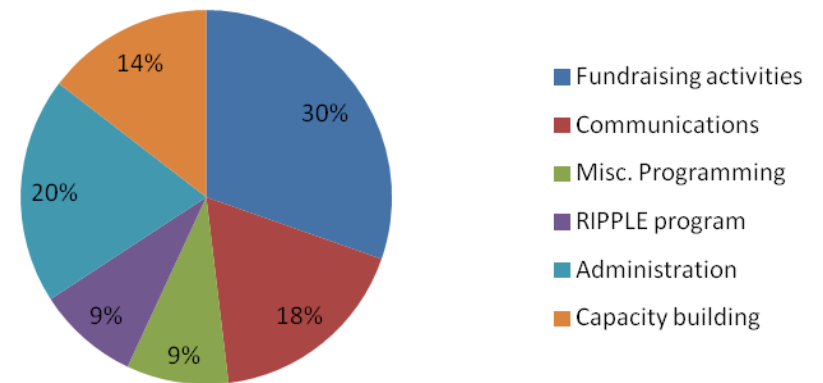
FINANCIALS

Investing in social value creation, equity and youth development.

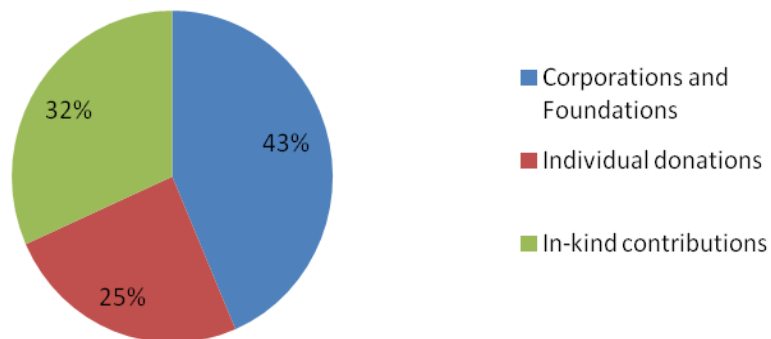
Revenue and Support FY 2012



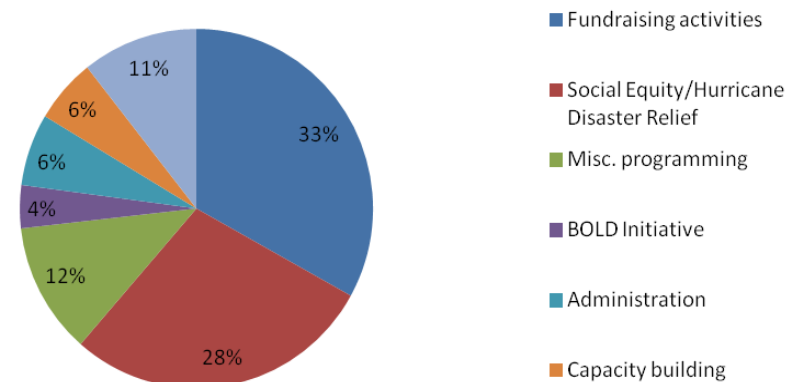
Expenses FY 2012



Revenue and Support FY 2013



Expenses FY 2013





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www.transdiasporanetwork.org
Tel +1 347-788-0261
info@transdiasporanetwork.org

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