

Cure Violence

Project Overview

New forms of social media are radically changing the way people organize, mobilize, communicate and campaign. Cure Violence is an international online movement that anyone can join to create and spread media that speak to their personal experiences, reinforce positive messages and social norms, and ultimately change the way we think-- on a massive scale-- so that killing is no longer an option. Accelerated by a pilot group of 5,000 Chicago youth, Cure Violence will continue to grow through partnering with expert organizations and local communities to aggregate and amplify their messages through digital networks.

About Cure Violence

For many communities, violence is the norm, whether it's an ongoing conflict that's been plaguing one block for 20 years or the recent emergence of cyberbullying. In order for behavior change to occur on a massive scale, the affected community's members need to be empowered to intervene on behalf of one another, feel safe communicating and organizing, and share resources to get their message out.

Change will not occur through traditional top-down education campaigns. It requires a fresh approach where the most trusted members within a community take on the role of credible messengers, sharing their personal stories and experience to change the thinking of those closest to them: friends, family members, neighbors, and others in their networks. Instead of one spokesperson with one message that may ultimately alienate the target population, Cure Violence harnesses what millions of potential spokespeople-- in classrooms, town hall safety meetings, community organizations, block clubs, think tanks, local government, and national agencies-- are already working on: Their own solutions to ending violence.

Cure Violence takes a 21st-century approach to "meeting people where they're at" and invites the messengers to 'communicate with the tools they're already using like social networking utilities and SMS technology to distribute firsthand text and multimedia responses to violence in their own cities. Users can comment and connect with one another and affect change through actionable content submitted by Cure Violence partners and local and national organizations who adopt it to organize and mobilize. Cure Violence content will be accessible via web, mobile device, broadcast, public projection and exhibitions. Chicago youth media and leadership groups will serve as first responders, citizen journalists and activists who lead the conversation. An open educational forum will enable project and curricula exchanges to take place, ensuring that even those with limited resources have access to a variety of ideas and strategies to get involved online and in their communities.

Developed by video artist Lincoln Schatz, Cure Violence is based on a community-driven approach to spreading change through bottom-up credible messaging, models of engagement from the field of participatory culture and especially its application to youth media education, and public art as a framework for inclusion and personal expression. The project draws on the experiences and individualized expertise of those whose lives are directly and indirectly affected by violence but who have all joined the cause, exploring not just the underlying problems, but proposed solutions from all corners of society.

LINCOLN SCHATZ <http://www.lincolnschatz.com/> me@lincolnschatz.com / 312.787.8242

SUPPORTERS

Cisco's global consultancy, the Internet Business Solutions Group, (IBSG) is collaborating with Lincoln Schatz and cities worldwide on Cure Violence - a public-private partnership aimed at reducing the epidemic of violence worldwide.
<http://www.cisco.com/>

Seed funding provided by **The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** <http://www.rwjf.org/>