

Almanac of the Future

A STORY OF SUCCESS

Motivational experience No. 27

**YOUTH
URBAN ART:
lifestyle and a
different way
of thinking
about things**





The Hip Hop culture with Break Dance and other scenic arts become lifestyles and ways of thinking for young people in the different districts of Metropolitan Lima, particularly the districts of Ate and San Juan de Lurigancho. Cultural manifestations of young people in public spaces, have managed to transform the stigmatization that civil society had generated on their attitudes, without perceiving that these spaces allowed the personal development of these young people, improving leadership, self-esteem, coexistence and social relations. They are alternative steps away from gangs and drugs, focused on self-realization.

At the Santa Clara Plaza

The busy Santa Clara Plaza in the Lima district of Ate at night is the scene of several young people and teenagers to show their skills in performing arts: Breakdance, Hip Hop and Afro-Peruvian Dance. Kalef, one of the veterans of the scene remembers: "At the beginning they did not let us practice in public spaces like squares. But over time and seeking dialogue with the municipality, we obtained permission, they even supplied electricity for the music ". Kalef is the artistic name of the B-boy Carlos Rivera. He fell in love with Breakdance when he was 16; today, with 34 years, this has not changed. Passers-by stop on their way to watch the Afro-Peruvian dance for a while, accompanied by the rhythms of bongo and cajon, typical instruments of Afro-Peruvian music. The dancers belong to ONUBA, a cultural association, founded 3 years ago by Walter Mendoza, Katherine Curilla and Leandro Mendieta. Along the way, more people joined, like Mario Sanchez, who have contributed with their talent so that the organization kept growing. Kati says: "More than becoming stars of dance and music, we seek among young people to strengthen personal development through the discipline of Afro-Peruvian dance and music; young people, dedicating time to train and enjoy, not only the achievement of presenting themselves in public, but also the path towards this

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achievement that allows them to become good persons. "

From youngster to youngster

Miguel Roncal, better known as B-boy Mirm is another veteran of the Ate scene. With others they founded the ATECREW group, synonym for totally extreme art. He is currently studying physical education in Arequipa and it is a great relief for him that there are other younger people who follow him in the battle, giving life to this group. Miguel, now far away, has already conformed with other peers the ATECREWAQP group in Arequipa. Miguel's life is Breakdance and, thanks to this urban art, his life has become a

youngster's story of overcoming that will soon be published. Cesar Huaman is part of KERIGMA, a social youth group. For Cesar, "young people always seek to focus on something or someone; if this arises from culture and art, young people can easily become passionate. But it's different for a youngster to learn from another youngster than from an adult." KERIGMA, ONUBA, ATECREW and also ESTILO LATINO are spaces, open for children, teenagers and youngsters who are attracted to Breakdance, Hip Hop, dance, music and other cultural activities. They offer summer courses, work with schools and have a presence in the public squares of their districts. Where possible, they also involve parents. This way it is possible for parents, just like local civil society, to begin appreciating what young people



do.

Veterans don't get lost

For some, their journey through art and urban culture is important but it is still only one step in their life. For others like Miguel, Kalef, Kati and Cesar urban art has become a lifelong passion. ONUBA, three years after its founding, has achieved the recognition of the Ministry of Culture as an expression of living culture at national level,

it works opening courses, preferably in more peripheral areas where there is very little cultural offer for young people. Young people who excel in these short courses are invited to be part of a training that lasts two years. In addition to Afro-Peruvian corporal expression, dance and music there are moments of training in leadership and coaching. Kati explains that many young people build their life plan at this time. Angela Nestarez accompanies, together with Brian and Jorge

from the Diocese of Chosica, supported by Misereor, youth groups of urban art in the area. Angela remembers many young people "who have achieved an integral growth that marks them for their next steps in their lives." People like Miguel, Kalef and Kati do not lose contact with these initiatives even though there is already a generational change. The members of ONUBA participate in public activities and presentations. Thanks to the neighborhood art program of the Lima Metro,



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the association has presented itself at the Metro stations. "For us," explains Kati, "presenting yourself there is like an advertising showcase." In order to guarantee an economic sustenance, it seeks to attract resources from companies that, within the framework of their social responsibility, eventually support the local culture.

Kalef with ESTILO LATINO, supported by Veronica Cobeñas and Yennifer Gallardo, conduct summer workshops teaching children and adolescents Breakdance. "When I started Breakdance," recalls Kalef, "one problem was that there were not many public spaces for young

people. Nor were there schools and my learning has been clearly empirical. But I was always struck by acrobatics. I think that from there I came up with the idea of teaching others." With support from the mayor's office of Ate and Metropolitan Lima, courses are offered in the neighborhoods. Kalef is finishing his university career in accounting; other members of the school have finished their professional careers and all, due to their vocation, collaborate in their free time to the cause, breakdance.

ATECREW is led by the third generation of young people. What began 11 years ago with

Miguel Roncal and others, continues to be carried out by a group of young people, among them Diana Roman. "We organize Hip Hop brigades, festivals and workshops and our stages are the public squares of the district."

KERIGMA started as a social youth group, working with children and youngsters in painting and reading courses and festivals. Of the eight people who started, there still are three, one of them Cesar Huaman, but many others joined, like Kelly Alvarado. "We make caravans in different neighborhoods of the sector. Over time, we improved a lot, structuring more the contents and achieving great

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ter permanence of work with local groups." The work with children and youngsters is in affective emotionality, identity, culture, dance and theater and there are plans to enter the world of batucada. The group is recognized by the Ministry of Culture as an expression of Living Community Culture.

Knowing what to refuse

Walter Mendoza, founding member of ONUBA, a university student with great passion for Afro-Peruvian rhythms, has promoted the idea of generating income for ONUBA, starting to manufacture the emblematic instrument, the Peruvian cajon (a percussion box). Of the group of friends from their neighborhood, many have not fared

well: of the six friends, two have died, one fell into drugs and another is in prison. "The self-discipline necessary for young people to commit themselves to constant training and dedication to perfect their artistic expression is a good defense against the risks that surround us", agree Kalef and Kati. The interest of youngsters quickly becomes into volunteer action based on vocation and dedication. Both parents and society in general perceive this and many change their way of thinking, valuing and accepting the artistic activities of young people.

Public Sector

Many youngsters feel at odds with society and, particularly with the public administra-

tion. Corruption, politicking and the little openness towards young people did their thing. The groups, aware of the danger they run from being used by the authorities, have often opted for an attitude that is not very open to dialogue, even confrontation. Without losing caution many have changed their attitude. In Ate, the Youth Development Council of Ate – CDJA (for its initials in Spanish) was born as a result of this dialogue, bringing together the different groups. Since then, more support has been obtained from the mayor's office, organizing cultural festivals together and an ordinance that promotes community living culture. "The CDJA helped us a lot, we met many organized groups from whom we learned how to manage. The CDJA opened doors to a wider world," recalls Miguel Roncal. The stru-

ggle for the State to invest more resources in culture continues but there is awareness of what has been achieved. In San Juan de Lurigancho the Youth Participation Council - CDPJ continues to be a self-organized initiative by ONU-BA and many other groups although not having managed to awaken an opening by the local government. Kati says: "There is little trustworthy capital among young people and their groupings and this makes it difficult to achieve greater synergy since together we could achieve much more". Kalef agrees with this reading: "We are in the battles but not at the work tables." With the initiative between the CDJA and the Municipality of Lima, they participate in the Living Community Culture program of the Ministry of Culture, organizing project competitions. KERIGMA has incorporated political advocacy into its work, with a strong presence in the municipal cultural center in Vitarte. The urban art of youngsters has moved more than it seems at first glance: the Ministry of Culture has instructed the national museums to give greater coverage to the Living Community Culture.

Looking ahead

The artistic groups of young people follow their course, where veterans pass the helm to those who were still students yesterday. This way, the commitment of the pioneers has not been lost. They enter into alliances between peers as well



as with the public sector and companies. In different ways they aspire to be economically sustainable, not as a source of personal income but to cover their operating expenses, based on the concept of the collaborative economy. It is awakening a business thinking that seeks in the first place to keep alive this option for the community of youngsters.

*The victorious motivating argument is obvious:
Because we like it!*



Messages to the future

- Young people and adolescents, many of them in an unfavorable situation, find in the performing arts such as Breakdance, Hip Hop or other cultural artistic areas their space and lifestyle. Leadership, self-esteem, coexistence and social relationships are part of this alternative path in this phase of their life.
- Doing with dedication their own, from urban artistic activities, adolescents and youngsters manage to break the frequent stigmatization of civil society towards young people in unfavorable situations.
- Doing what you like, achieving self-realization, encourages many young people to leave their own comfort zone, feel empowered and think more about others; for some it is their own history of overcoming.

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Almanac to the Future

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