

YouthActionNet®

CASE STUDY SERIES

G Hip Hop:

*Building Engaged Communities
with Urban Culture*

A partnership between:



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

School of Foreign Service
Global Human Development Program



Introduction

This is one of a series of case studies produced by students enrolled in the Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University through its partnership with the International Youth Foundation (IYF). Students enrolled in a course exploring the role of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs were paired with young leaders of social ventures identified through the IYF's YouthActionNet® program. The students were given the assignment of analyzing the venture's assets, successful methodologies, and opportunities for investment to increase impact. Through this experiential learning process, the student consultants gained hands-on experience and exposure to the needs of social enterprises. The ventures, too, benefited from student insights into their strengths, areas for growth, and recommendations for enhancing their impact and sustainability. The Georgetown practicum is part of YouthActionNet's larger efforts to partner with institutions of higher learning around the globe to integrate social change into the academic experience and career interests of students.

International Youth Foundation

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) invests in the extraordinary potential of young people. Founded in 1990, IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. IYF programs are catalysts of change that help young people obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities.

www.iyfnet.org

YouthActionNet®

Since 2001, YouthActionNet, a program of the International Youth Foundation, has provided founders of social ventures, ages 18 to 29, with the training, networking, coaching, funding, and advocacy opportunities they need to strengthen and scale their impact. These young social entrepreneurs have pioneered innovative solutions to critical local and global challenges, resulting in increased civic engagement, improved health, education reform, economic opportunity, environmental protection, and more inclusive societies. Our work is carried out through a network of 23 national and regional youth leadership institutes that collectively support over 1,350 young social entrepreneurs globally.

www.youthactionnet.org

Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University

The Global Human Development Program of Georgetown University is home to one of the world's premier master's degree programs in international development. An innovative, academically rigorous skills-based graduate program, the Master of Global Human Development degree prepares the next generation of development professionals to work with public sector agencies, private businesses, and non-profit organizations that advance development. Through coursework, extracurricular activity, and practical fieldwork experiences, our graduates develop the insights, skills, and experiences necessary to become leaders in development and make a difference in our global community.

<https://ghd.georgetown.edu>

INTRODUCTION

Meet Pape Camara: Co-Founder

Pape Mamadou Camara is a YouthActionNet® Fellow who co-founded G Hip Hop. While growing up in Guédiawaye, a suburban area outside Dakar, Senegal, he observed the negative impact of youth delinquency on young people's futures. He saw how underserved youth lacked opportunities to express themselves in ways that positively impacted their community. Pape's passion for the arts and hip hop culture motivated him to found G Hip Hop with his friends as a way of unifying his neighborhood. He is responsible for planning and monitoring activities, recording financial and technical accounts, fundraising, developing local and international networks, advertising, and organizing events.

Pape's co-founders are Malal Talla (President), Malick Sarr (Vice President), and Pape Aly Gueye (Secretary).

G Hip Hop is leveraging urban and hip hop culture to uplift oppressed urban youth.



G Hip Hop began as a volunteering initiative to clean up a space in hopes of building a center for youth. It is now a training center that uses the arts to promote active citizenship. The center advocates for disadvantaged community members through hip hop lyrics that promote responsibility and appreciation of public spaces. The Senegalese association was established in 2010 and is located in Guédiawaye.

G Hip Hop is guided by the theme of "Feed the Future" and rooted in the will of each of its members. It aims to educate youth living in marginalized areas of the Dakar region. Through lectures and training programs, G Hip Hop also educates youth on citizenship, environmental protection, economic empowerment, and hip hop culture. In 2015, over 100 young people were trained by the center, with multiple events hosted year-round, including concerts and workshops.

The Problem

Insecurity is a reality for Guédiawaye. Three out of five young people end up in prison at some point in their lives. Many area youth experience poverty, academic failure, lack of infrastructure, unemployment, and isolation. The neighborhoods are full of trash, with people unaware that maintaining a clean environment benefits the entire community and demonstrates civic engagement. Unsanitary conditions also result in stagnant rainwater. This increases the prevalence of mosquitos, which cause malaria and other infectious diseases.

The disconnect between youth and older generations impedes community progress because there is no unification. Women are excluded from the dialogue, which further perpetuates inequality. There are very few officials, engineers, and skilled workers in the suburbs of Dakar, and a very high proportion of informal sector workers. The persistence of poverty causes some young people to engage in banditry. Their criminal activities invite violence and insecurity into the neighborhoods,

which affects everyone. The community needs to be civically engaged in order to reduce the number of youth involved in criminal activity. People also need to voice their opinions about transparent policies that can improve their overall quality of life, equality, and unification.

The Solution

G Hip Hop aims to reduce poverty, academic failure, unemployment, and delinquency in Senegal by empowering youth to express themselves through the arts. At its center, G Hip Hop provides youth with guidance to help them reach their full potential as citizens through positive civic action instead of violence.

G Hip Hop has various spaces in the center—an exhibition room, directors’ development room, studio, stage for shows, and a restaurant. The center provides classes in:

- Arts—Beat-making, DJ-ing, graffiti, dance, and rap
- Arts Management—Artistic management and cultural entrepreneurship
- Audiovisual—Photography, video production, and design

To insure quality interaction and learning, the classes have a maximum of 12 students each except the dance class, which has 18. The Arts Management students receive a certificate after completing the six-month program, which they can include in their résumé. G Hip Hop has had 50 representative groups of the community join their action. Five art workshops, an arts management class, and three audiovisual workshops were created and are being sustained. G Hip Hop students are given these classes for free and provided a free membership card as well. The Center does not require a diploma or school transcripts to attend, so children are not excluded or discriminated against based on their level of education.

In addition to classes, street conferences are hosted regularly, during which G Hip Hop students distribute information to the community about citizenship, environmental protection, economic empowerment, and hip hop culture. Two exhibitions/fairs, known as *La Foire Civico-Hip Hop*, have been successfully presented to the community. During the fairs, four citizenship informational shops/canteens are displayed. The annual fairs are now G Hip Hop’s largest events.

The classes, street conferences, and festivals help youth to become more engaged and have fostered inter-generational relationships. Active community engagement has proven that one can create a beautiful space that was previously non-existent. One outcome of this realization is that G Hip Hop has successfully cleaned up and created three playgrounds for the community’s children.



Operational Model

G Hip Hop is a registered non-profit organization that follows a hybrid model. It is a stand-alone organization with a restaurant, stage, and recording studio. It receives donations from the European Union committee, the Senegalese government, Eiffage, the U.S. Embassy, and the International Organisation of La Francophonie. It also generates its own revenue from the restaurant, studio sessions, and renting of the stage for concerts. There is also a membership card fee of \$5 per person (free to children who are students of G Hip Hop) to utilize the G Hip Hop Center facilities and attend events.

KEY ASSETS AND SUCCESSFUL METHODOLOGIES

G Hip Hop has four key assets that contribute to its sustainability. The Civic Hip Hop Fair, G Hip Hop Center's location and infrastructure, youth engagement, and a strong network have all contributed to the organization's ability to secure grants and support from other organizations.

Civic Hip Hop Fair

The Guédiawaye by Rap Festival was founded in 2007 by YouKoungKoung Productions and was inspired by "Babylon by Bus" by Bob Marley. The artists told their stories of Guédiawaye through artistic expression (e.g., rap, graffiti, dance). This festival stopped for four years, so G Hip Hop reintroduced the concept in 2014 through its own eight-day event, *La Foire Civico-Hip Hop*, supported by the European Union. There are four concerts throughout the fair and it is considered the first international hip hop event on civic action.



Phases of action for *La Foire Civico-Hip Hop* include:

1. Meetings with local authorities and cultural associations to solicit their buy-in and active engagement. (1 month)
 - a. The community understood the preparation, implementation, and assessment of the fair so that they are directly involved.
 - b. A rap single was produced, entitled "Represent Wakhinane no Ko moom" and was distributed throughout the neighborhood.
 - c. Posters were made, flyers were distributed, and graffiti was inscribed on the walls calling for mobilization.
2. Development of a charter of commitment regarding preparation, implementation and assessment, which was developed, written, and signed by these representative groups.
3. Preparation of *La Foire Civico-Hip Hop*. (9 months long, divided into 2 parts)
 - a. The implementation of workshops, or "dox dajje," (to meet in the street) and a street conference on what the fair will be about. The "Dox dajje" workshops were two hours long and were held three times a week for three months. (3 months)

- b. Making the workshops for the fair, setting up canteens, and recovering land for playgrounds. (6 months)

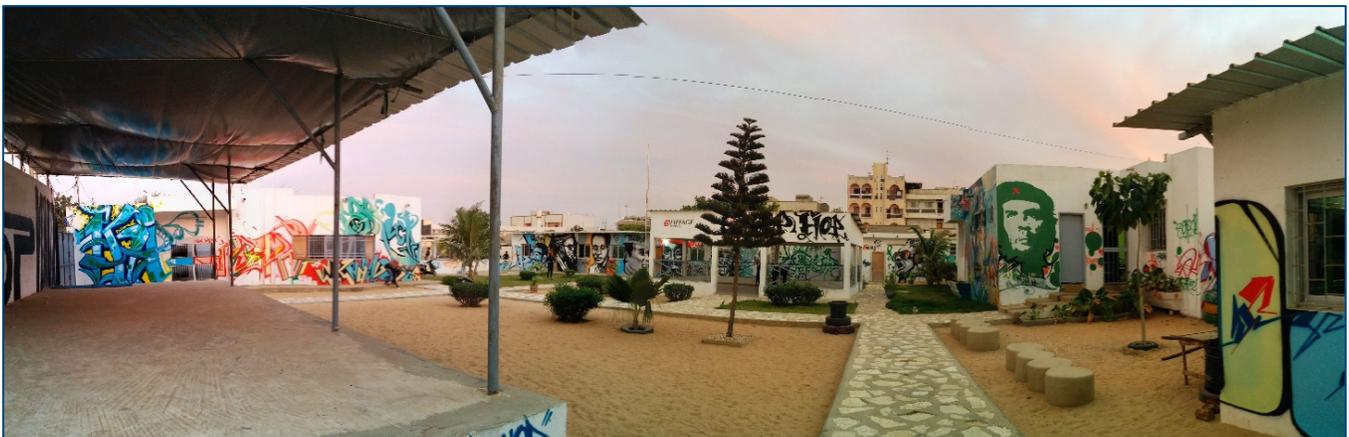
Fifty groups that represented women, youth, sports associations, cultural associations, artists, and authorities collectively worked on the project at the G Hip Hop Center.

The focus of these workshops was citizenship, urban living, civility, and their interconnections with hip hop. The G Hip Hop team, Nun Jeggen, and Log Square drive the workshops. Local authorities and cultural and sporting associations are invited every time. Notes are taken at each workshop as background for reports. Also, photographs and mini movies are made. Some testimonies are recorded. The press and the national and international media (e.g., RFI, Voice of America, BBC Africa) are informed of the street workshops and encouraged to attend. The videos are uploaded to YouTube. Besides publicizing the event, the videos recognize the target groups because their actions in the workshops are publically recognized.

The Civic Hip Hop Fair is important because it showcases the efforts of the organization and its strength in unifying representative groups of the community. The purpose of a grand fair was to make an impact throughout the district. If someone who isn't involved walks down the street and hears the music, they might be inclined to see what the event is about. Approximately 200 people attended the fair in the mornings, with about 3,000 people attending the fair concerts annually.

Location & Physical Infrastructure

G Hip Hop began as an empty space full of trash. Pape, his fellow founders, and neighbors volunteered to clean up the space for the betterment of their community and environment. The center was built afterwards and designed artistically with beautiful graffiti. The center has an exhibition room, directors' development room, a studio, a stage, and a restaurant. Through the renovation of this space, the youth of Guédiawaye now have a learning space. They also see how caring for their environment and maintaining the new infrastructure produces a permanent safe space for benefit of the community. In addition, it proves that being from a poor neighborhood is not a reason to fail or to not become successful in life.



Unique Approach to Engaging Youth

According to the World Bank's World Development Index, Senegalese youth between the ages of 0-14 make up 43% of the population. The literacy rate for 15- to 24-year-olds has fallen from 66% in 2011 to 56% in 2013. Youth are G Hip Hop's target group and hip hop is a way of life for them. G Hip Hop offers a unique approach to engaging Senegalese youth. Through the use of music and other forms of art—such as dance, photography, and graffiti—students are able to express their struggles while developing writing skills that will empower them in the future. For example, by rapping local news, the youth are able to become better-informed citizens.

G Hip Hop encourages civic engagement beyond traditional institutional structures. Youth empowerment allows them to make an impact for their future by promoting the inclusion of marginalized sectors.

Network

Pape works for Ashoka Sahel full-time as their social media manager. His career is a direct way for him to gain knowledge about social entrepreneurship and how to properly assess G Hip Hop. G Hip Hop's connections and partnerships with local and foreign governments, and non-governmental organizations demonstrate the association's potential to leverage contacts and pursue a new framework for impacting youth. His co-founders have other businesses so their experiences as entrepreneurs add to G Hip Hop's potential. Malal Talla is a well-known rapper and is one of the leaders of Y'en a Marre. Pape Aly Gueye, the secretary of G Hip Hop, is a Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Fellow. Malick Sarr's love of nature and strong leadership skills have made him a leader in his community and the project manager for green spaces. The co-founders collectively provide tools to sustain G Hip Hop and continue innovative ways to engage the youth.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT

G Hip Hop's greatest unmet needs are marketing, quantitatively measuring impact, and scaling. New investments built into these three key areas will have the greatest impact on the association's sustainability.

Marketing

G Hip Hop's website could be clearer and made more engaging. Also, because the organization receives funding from the U.S. Embassy, the site should provide donors with an English language option. The YouTube channel needs shorter videos and more effective documentaries that demonstrate the impact G Hip Hop is making in the community. The organization could also do more to leverage social media, and especially Facebook. Its page does not have many likes and few photos. The work of the students, the teachers, and the artist members of G Hip Hop are not displayed throughout the community or in local venues.

Investing in social media is crucial to many social enterprises. If G Hip Hop invested additional time and resources into its website, YouTube channel, and Facebook page, it would lead to greater visibility among donors, an expanded fan base for local artists, and more students who could benefit from its services. Short YouTube clips of *La Foire Civico-Hip Hop* could also be produced to entice more visitors to attend future events. Selling products such as clothes with the G Hip Hop logo and CDs of the artists—and featuring drawings at the center and at events—would increase awareness

about G Hip Hop's mission, while generating profits. The restaurant is also not making as much profit as the organization would like but it is also not visible from the street. Promotion of the restaurant to the community through flyers could attract more revenue. Also, food sold by the restaurant at events would bring more people to eat.

Measuring Impact – Monitoring & Evaluation Systems

One major constraint for social entrepreneurs, especially those that lead a non-profit organization, is acquiring start-up capital. At its inception, G Hip Hop received financial support from the European Union committee, the Senegalese government, Eiffage, the U.S. Embassy, and the International Organisation of La Francophonie. The problem is that government grants are usually short-term and require proof of impact in order for the organization to renew their funding. The EU committee granted 90% of the 40,000€ requested in 2013 for two years. This funding has already expired so no one can be fully employed any longer at G Hip Hop except the restaurant and the cleaning staff. G Hip Hop is required to provide documentation in hopes of more funding but until then, their self-generated revenue is not enough. If G Hip Hop could measure its impact statistically, the center could gain more outside revenue until it can achieve better methods of self-generated profits.

Donors see G Hip Hop's potential so this is a window of opportunity to build on their trust. A profile on each student with their picture in a system that is attached to their membership cards will allow G Hip Hop to track how frequently each student uses the center. Evaluations of the classes every three months could assess whether the students are benefiting from the structure and allow more student input. An attendance sheet of the students in each class would allow staff to monitor student retention rates at the center. The International Music Council (IMC) is an organization G Hip Hop could contact regarding its sustainability needs and to generate increased global awareness about its work.

Scaling

G Hip Hop's classes currently hold a maximum of 12 students each except for dance, which accommodates 18 per class. There is currently no plan in place for expanding class size. G Hip Hop would like to expand locally and even eventually throughout West Africa. However, to expand, it needs more volunteers to teach the classes and more capital to build new centers across West Africa.

A sign-up sheet at the main entrances of *La Foire Civico-Hip Hop* and their other year-round events offers one way to track the number of people who attend. Also, sending information by mail or e-mail using these sign-up sheets are ways to continue to inform those who are not members. L'Alliance Française is another organization G Hip Hop might look to partner with for outreach and collaboration on various events. All of these suggestions could increase both membership and volunteer engagement. Current financial constraints make volunteers especially necessary.

Music Basti is another non-profit organization in New Delhi, India that began with a small group of volunteers in 2008 and now has over 30 full and part-time staff, in addition to volunteers. The difference is that Music Basti is a part of a larger organization called Integrated Development Education Association (IDEA), but their methods for scaling can still be useful.

CONCLUSION

People might revert to stereotypes and clichés of hip hop artists as being insolent, violent, and prone to drug use, but hip hop artists and music are breaking barriers by proving that delinquent youth don't have to be a product of their environment. My interviews of Pape Mamadou Camara were insightful because he was able to explain in better detail the activities they provide to impact youth. He and his co-founders' passion for their community and desires for the future generation to become leaders are the reasons why G Hip Hop has been running successfully for six years.

G Hip Hop is focused on the people who will influence the world for generations to come. Targeting this marginalized group through hip hop disrupts normal engagement methods. Their long-term vision for change is one that I believe can succeed with secured investments, and will be a blueprint for future hip hop and youth-focused organizations worldwide. Music has always touched people but hip hop reaches oppressed groups within societies. It offers an innovative way to approach young people and conveys important messages.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT G HIP HOP

- G Hip Hop website: <http://ghiphop.sn/>
- G Hip Hop YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2rxRAuLXUjYyhJd7lpv-w>
- G Hip Hop Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/guediawayehiphop/?fref=photo>
- La Foire Civico-Hip Hop YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwO5oOLhMtU>
- Pape Camara's YouthActionNet profile: <http://www.youthactionnet.org/fellows/1144/>
- Background on hip hop in Senegal:
 - <http://www.npr.org/2015/04/25/401715147/rap-city-sweat-hope-hip-hop-in-dakar>
 - <http://musicinafrica.net/hip-hop-senegal>
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200708170863.html>
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senegalese_hip_hop

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