



With the contributions of the Provincial Council of Barcelona, the Province of Gipuzkoa, the City of Tromsø, PAX and VNG International

UCLG Peace Prize

Jury report, November 2019

Context

Applications for the UCLG Peace Prize 2019 have been submitted by local governments from 19 countries around the world. Out of these applications the high-level jury of the prize has selected five top contenders. These shortlisted candidates have been supported to produce videos of their initiatives, and have been invited to share their experience at the UCLG World Congress, which took place from 11-15 November 2019 in Durban, South Africa. Prior to the conference, the jury of the Peace Prize has chosen the winner of the 2019 UCLG Peace Prize. The decision has been made based on the applications of the contestants as well as the videos that have been produced. This document provides insight into the reflections of the jury.

The Jury

The Jury of the UCLG Peace Prize 2019 consists of the following people:

- Dr. Katarina Kruhonja, peace activist, Centre for Peace, Non-Violence and Human Rights, Croatia
- Mr. Wim Deetman, Former mayor The Hague, former chair of the UCLG Committee on City Diplomacy
- Dr. Tarik Kupusović, former Mayor of Sarajevo
- Dr. Tadatoshi Akiba, former Mayor of Hiroshima, and former president of Mayors for Peace
- Mr. Jerome Gama Surur, former Deputy State Governor of Eastern Equatoria, South Sudan
- Prof. Thulisile Nomkhosi Madonsela, Professor of Law at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, and former Public Prosecutor

Jury Opinion

In making the selection of the winner, the jury had the following considerations. Please note that the order in which the finalists are mentioned is alphabetical, and thus does not represent any qualitative ranking.

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VNG International • P.O. Box 30435 • 2500 GK The Hague, The Netherlands •
Tel.: + 31 (0)70-373 8413 • Fax: + 31 (0)70-373 86 60 • peaceprize.uclg.org





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Arsal

In 2014, IS and al-Nusra cells infiltrated Arsal from Syria. A period of war and terror rule tore a community apart. Now, Arsal municipality tries to bring it back together. It does so through initiating and facilitating dialogue and mediation between Lebanese inhabitants and Syrian refugees.

The municipality of Arsal has been selected as winner of the 2019 UCLG Peace Prize because it displays great efforts in addressing potential sources of conflict in a community that has been through a very difficult time and is still facing complex challenges. By reacting 24/7 to outbursts of conflict with the risk of escalation and applying the *Sulha* principle that connects with Arab culture, the municipality shows the transformative power that local governments can have in reinforcing social cohesion. The fact that the municipality allocates part of its budget to cover for repairs and compensation to prevent escalation of conflict, even with a strained budget and hosting a many more refugees than the community's original population, is an example that shows to what great lengths the local administration goes to prevent its community from falling apart.

Bogotá

The city of Bogotá has long been subjected to armed conflict with victims and perpetrators on both sides. Now Bogotá tries to become a symbol of civil society organizing in the quest for peace. An example of such efforts is the use of commemorations on specific dates as a mechanism to establish collective recognition. Shared commemorations of victims from both sides of the Colombian civil war are set up through cultural and artistic activities.

The jury is impressed with the innovative way in which the City of Bogotá manages to bring together victims and relatives from multiple sides of the conflict through culture and artistic expression. The initiative is a prime example showing how suffering in conflicts is universal and that rather than fuelling resentment, the sharing of experiences and breaking the silence about traumatic events from the past can aid in the process of reconciliation and healing. The *Shared Commemorations* approach is effective in promoting the reconstruction of the social fabric of the community. The initiative shows effective collaboration with the private sector and other stakeholders, and has inspirational value for local governments in post-conflict areas around the world due to its high degree of replicability.

Duhok

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The Governorate of Duhok is one of the Kurdistan region provinces in Iraq. Before IS attacks on Mosul, Duhok had about 1,150,000 residents. In the following years however, the governorate has welcomed a huge influx of refugees and internally displaced and provided a safe haven with equal treatment and equal access to municipal and health facilities. Duhok's population has grown exponentially including communities with different religious backgrounds, which live in peace together as the governorate works hard to ensure peaceful coexistence.

The Jury commends the Governorate in Duhok for the way in which it displayed compassion and resilience in taking care of internally displaced persons and refugees. Located in an area that is facing complex and protracted threats to stability, Duhok has managed to prevent tensions between different population groups from escalating, while providing essential services in the face of enormous pressure and a fragile context. The effective coordination of the crisis, among other by forming the Board of Relief and Humanitarian Affairs and cooperating with humanitarian and international organisations, is impressive. The safeguarding of human rights and human security undoubtedly contribute to the prevention of conflicts between different communities residing in Duhok. The jury recognises the high learning potential for other local governments both in the region and elsewhere, that are faced with the daunting challenge of providing a safe place for displaced people.

Manizales

The 'Change Your Mind, Build Peace' program of the city of Manizales in Colombia started in 2016 and was built along with gang members from the city to solve problems among young people who are fighting for territories. The aim is to reduce urban violence due to organised crime, trying to dismantle youth gangs and reducing violence by providing educational alternatives for disadvantaged youth.

The Jury is impressed by the results of the initiative, with a significant drop in homicide rates and the dismantling of four gangs in two years. The approach of co-creating the initiative with young people themselves has undoubtedly contributed to its success. The initiative also shows the value of working with committed higher education institutions to be able to provide alternative opportunities for young people who are members of a gang. By anchoring the initiative in legislation, the local administration ensures the sustainability of the initiative beyond changes of government. The Jury notes that this is a highly replicable initiative for other local governments that are dealing with protracted violence and proliferation of gangs.

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Santiago de Cali

Cali has been one of the cities that has suffered the most from violence in Colombia, from drug-trafficking to war and its consequences. Many former combatants from illegal armed groups have decided to make Cali a city to build their lives. The city faces challenges of a high homicide rate and many youth gangs. Promoters of Peace and Civic Culture, established by the first Secretary for Peace and Civic Culture, have set up initiatives on urban peace. These initiatives include reconciliation and restorative justice.

The initiative works with a mixed target group of victims of the armed conflict, former combatants, young ex-gangsters, and residents living in violent parts of the city. Furthermore, the strategy incorporates an age-specific approach with a high prevalence of young people, and it includes men, women and people from various backgrounds. This makes it a profoundly inclusive approach. The Jury values the linkage between economic remuneration for Civic Culture and Peace Managers with the merits of completing a Route that includes social retribution to the city, psychosocial and artistic components. The rate of recidivism among the Peace Managers is very low with 1.2% which shows the value of an approach as comprehensive as this. Santiago de Cali has been a finalist in the previous edition of the UCLG Peace Prize as well, and the Jury recognises that the city continues to be a strong example of how local governments can set up powerful programmes that contribute to a culture of peace.

Final decision

First and foremost, the jury members note that all finalists of the award displayed exceptionally high quality initiatives and would be worthy to win the award. All five finalists are working very hard trying to resolve difficult challenges, and are doing so under complex circumstances. Efforts like those displayed by the finalists of the award show that the human race can surpass even the most difficult circumstances, showing that there is hope for a positive future in their communities. However, as there can only be one winner, the jury had to make a difficult decision, and has finally selected the municipality of **Arsal** in Lebanon as winner of the 2019 UCLG Peace Prize.

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