

Narrator:

An important part of the President's Forum with Young African Leaders was a series of visits to the local community in Washington. Forum delegates traveled to different organizations throughout the city to meet residents and volunteers in some of the city's leading civic organizations.

One of these organizations is called CentroNía, a school serving low-income families.

Paulo Alculeto Lopes de Araujo was a forum delegate from Mozambique.

Paulo Alculeto Lopes de Araujo:

This is fantastic. The work they're doing, it's great. For it's going to be inspiring because we don't have such type of a situation in my country, I'm from Mozambique.

Narrator:

CentroNía was created in 1986. Then, a small group of concerned low-income parents wanted to ensure that their children could receive a high-quality bilingual education. The result was the District of Columbia Bilingual Public Charter School, which serves the entire family —, teaching and improving the lives of children, youth, and parents within the community and beyond.

Today, CentroNía's programs reach more than 1,500 low-income children and families every year. The center provides the local community with services and programs that include early childhood education, before- and after-school child care, youth development, and professional development opportunities for adults. As part of their trip to CentroNía, forum delegates visited a kindergarten class. (context audio – we have a guest)

Narrator:

Nadja Remane Gomes is from Mozambique.

Nadja Remane Gomes:

It's amazing because they teach the children using art, using music, using design, theater, so part that I'm taking to my country, because in my country, it's different. For them, the goal is just teaching Portuguese, teaching maths — doesn't matter if the children have time to play or not. So I think it's a way to teach skills and abilities. So I'm happy because I can gain something to take to my country to share with them.

Narrator:

One of the CentroNía kindergarten teachers explained how the school uses themes as a way to teach children about different subjects.

CentroNía teacher:

Most of our students are from Latino communities, so they speak English and Spanish. They are thoroughly bilingual. And during this summer, our theme is the jungle. So we're working in different topics related to the jungle. We have field trips related to the jungle, too. And also we work in math and lectures during the day.

Narrator:

The CentroNía visit was organized with the U.S. Peace Corps. The Peace Corps is a volunteer organization with a long history of development assistance in Africa. In fact, the very first Peace Corps volunteers went to Ghana and Tanzania in 1961.

CentroNía also has a strong focus on volunteerism. In addition to volunteer-based fundraising, the center provides training to volunteers to become tutors, helping students improve their performance in reading, math, and other subjects. Marco Peter de Paula Almeida is a forum delegate from Angola.

Marco Peter de Paula Almeida:

Mostly being volunteer work, like having to raise funds, this is huge. We come from very young countries, but they are becoming more and more materialistic. So the Peace Corps is a great example that we can build great societies, great men, great nations with volunteer work and with engagement.

Narrator:

The President's Forum with Young African Leaders devoted a lot of attention to national service and volunteerism as a way to empower youth in African countries. CentroNía is only one of many organizations that owe their success to the dedication, spirit, and generosity of individuals who together, are making a real difference in their community.

Narrator:

The President's Forum with Young African Leaders took place in Washington from August 3rd to August 5th. For more information, visit [www.america.gov](http://www.america.gov).

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