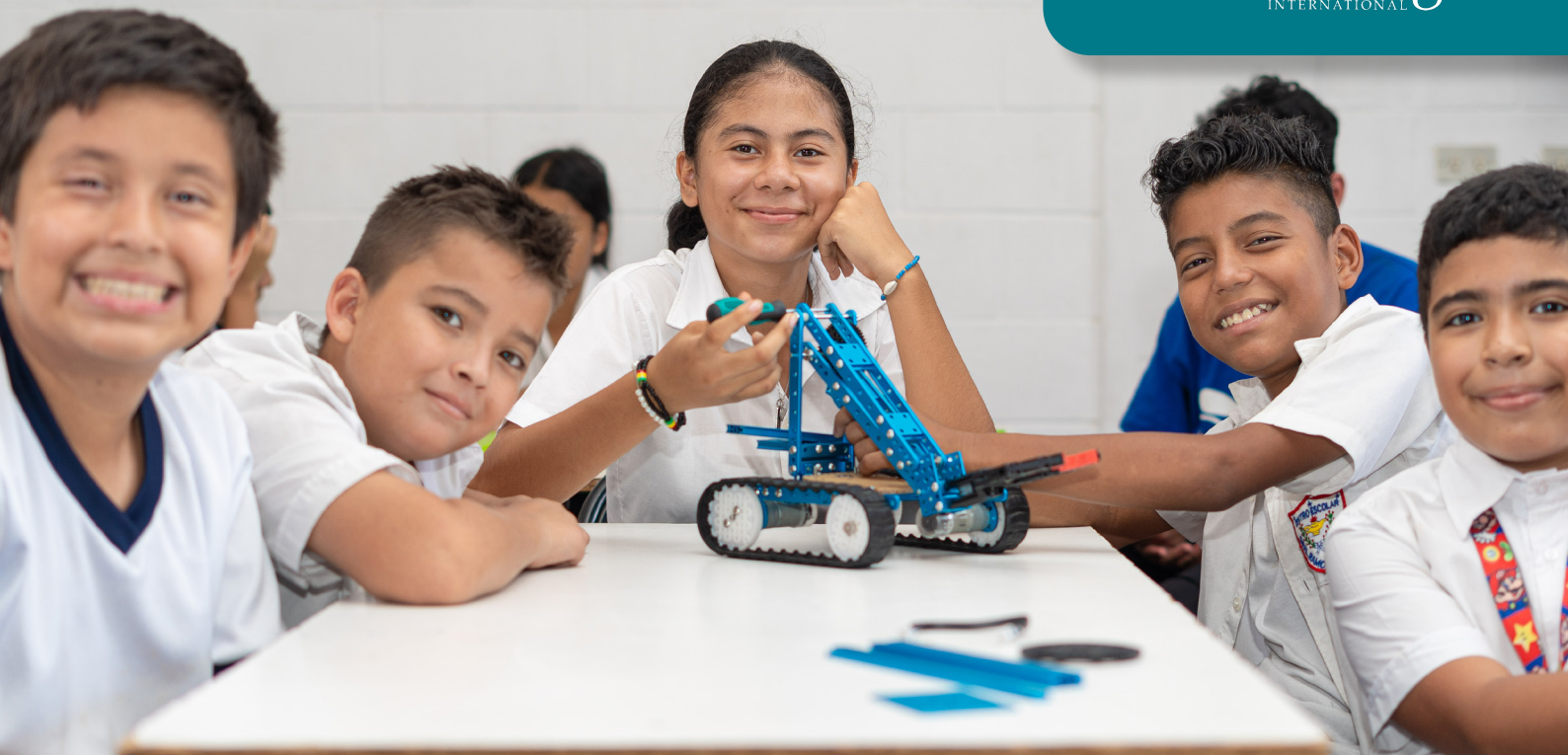




At a Glance

GLASSWING INTERNATIONAL

Glasswing International is a nonprofit founded in El Salvador to address the root causes and consequences of violence and poverty by strengthening public systems rather than replacing them. Through trauma-informed education, mental health, and youth leadership programs embedded in public schools and clinics, Glasswing creates safe inclusive spaces where young people can learn, heal, and lead. The result is community driven change where adolescents build the confidence, skills, and agency to transform their own lives and their communities.

Founding Background

Glasswing International is a nonprofit organization founded in El Salvador in 2007 by siblings Celina and Diego de Sola and Ken Baker. It was created as a platform to “enable people to do good in their own communities” through volunteering, education, and health initiatives that

address the root causes and consequences of violence and poverty. What began as a small volunteer-based initiative has evolved into one of Latin America’s most recognized organizations in positive youth development, community resilience, and trauma-informed education.

Glasswing emerged in response to widespread social inequality and violence in Central America. The founders—returning home from international careers—sought to mobilize local talent and resources to strengthen public institutions rather than replace them. Volunteerism has remained central to its mission: the organization began by connecting individuals and corporations with under-resourced public schools for mentorship and community improvement projects. Over time, this community-based model expanded to include health, mental health, and gender-transformative youth programs.

Overview of Programs Offered

Glasswing's flagship education initiative is the Community Schools Program, which turns public schools into hubs of learning and community engagement through after-school clubs and mentorship. Within this platform, programs such as Club de Niñas (Girls' Club) and Entre Jóvenes (Among Youth) provide safe, structured spaces where adolescents can strengthen academic, social, and emotional skills while critically reflecting on gender roles, relationships, and violence prevention. The organization also operates youth leadership and economic opportunity programs—such as Youth Impact Leaders and the Glasswing Fellows Program—that equip young people with civic, entrepreneurial, and professional skills to design and lead community projects.

Target Population

Glasswing primarily serves adolescents and young adults between the ages of 10 and 24, including both in-school and out-of-school youth. Its gender-focused initiatives reach girls and boys together, emphasizing the importance of engaging men and boys as partners in gender equality. Programs are designed for youth living in contexts of poverty and violence, including urban and peri-urban neighborhoods across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Relationship to Formal Systems

Glasswing operates in partnership with public institutions—especially ministries of education, health, and youth—to strengthen rather than supplant existing systems. Its school-based programs are implemented within public schools, while its health and mental health initiatives work through local clinics and community health networks. Through these collaborations, Glasswing contributes to national education and youth policies focused on inclusion, well-being, and gender equity.

Program Structure and Duration

The Community Schools model functions year-round and is embedded in the school day or offered as an after-school program. Gender and life-skills clubs such as Entre Jóvenes meet weekly, with volunteer mentors trained to facilitate discussions and activities over a one- or two-year cycle. Leadership and fellowship

programs typically span six to twelve months, combining classroom instruction, mentoring, and applied community projects.

Program Delivery

Glasswing's programs are delivered by trained community and corporate volunteers, educators, and youth mentors. In schools, facilitators—often university students or professionals—receive comprehensive training in gender, trauma-informed practices, and positive youth development. Many alumni of Glasswing programs return as mentors, reinforcing a cycle of youth leadership and community care.

Curriculum

Program curricula are developed internally by multidisciplinary teams and contextualized for each country. The curriculum integrates social and emotional learning, mental health awareness, healthy masculinities, and gender equity. Activities include role-playing, reflection exercises, and community dialogues designed to help adolescents critically examine and challenge harmful gender stereotypes. Materials are adapted to local cultural

and legal contexts—for example, tailoring sensitive content around sexuality and reproductive health. The Entre Jóvenes curriculum (designed as facilitator guides) was updated in 2025 with new modules that focus on gender equality, emotional intelligence, healthy relationships, and mental health. The revised version encourages critical reflection on social stereotypes, promotes empathy and respect, and helps adolescents build practical skills for communication, consent, and well being in both their personal and community lives.

Geography and Reach

Founded in El Salvador, Glasswing now operates in 15 countries across Latin America and the Caribbean and maintains a regional office in New York City. As of 2024, it has reached over 6 million people, including more than 550,000 students through education programs and 510,000 participants through health and mental health initiatives. The organization has mobilized 150,000 volunteers and partnered with hundreds of schools, communities, and public institutions to foster sustainable, locally led change.

For more information, see: glasswing.org



OVERVIEW AND MISSION

Since its founding in 2007, Glasswing International has sought to transform the structural and cultural conditions that limit opportunity for children and youth across Latin America and the Caribbean. The organization’s mission is to address the root causes and consequences of violence and poverty through education and health programs that empower youth and communities and strengthen public systems.

Glasswing’s educational philosophy emphasizes the creation of environments where young people can learn, feel safe, and develop social and emotional skills that build resilience. Their work is grounded in the belief that every young person has the potential to transform their future when supported by strong schools, families, and communities. Glasswing uses a Community Schools model that positions schools as hubs for holistic youth and community development. The model involves four interrelated pillars: 1) Volunteer-led after-school programs; 2) Community engagement; 3) Academic and socio-emotional support; and 4) Youth leadership development. Within this integrated framework, Glasswing’s attempts to shift adolescent gender norms is part of its broader effort to create safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments. Programs such as Entre Jóvenes and Girls’ Clubs operate inside this model, linking gender equity with mental health, academics, and community participation.



Approach to Shifting Adolescent Gender Norms

Glasswing’s community-school model, trauma-informed pedagogy, and mentorship structures are designed to create protective spaces while also challenging social norms, particularly those related to gender and violence. Glasswing’s work to shift adolescent gender norms is most visible through its Girls’ Clubs and Entre Jóvenes (Among Youth) programs. These clubs attempt to foster reflection, dialogue, and leadership among adolescents, helping them develop the skills and confidence to challenge restrictive gender expectations. In particular, Glasswings is working to shift adolescent gender norms

around the division of labor in the household and care giving, careers and educational possibilities for males and females, and harmful masculinity that results in gender-based violence.

Club de Niñas (Girls' Clubs)

In 2013, Glasswing launched afterschool Girls Clubs in its partner schools. These Safe Spaces provide girls ages 9 to 18 with safe structured environments where they engage in mentorship, reproductive health education, and community service projects. Sessions focus on self esteem, relationships, bodily autonomy, and goal setting, and are intentionally designed to nurture confidence, belonging, and voice for girls who are growing up in contexts marked by violence, inequality, and limited opportunity. Girls Clubs are implemented in public schools, shelters, and health centers in vulnerable rural and urban communities, and support girls to strengthen social, health, and financial skills that reduce risks such as school dropout, teenage pregnancy, and gender based violence, with trained local leaders and peer

mentors serving as role models. Girls Clubs are implemented through its Community Schools model or through community clinics, and continue to operate in many of the same schools where Entre Jóvenes is offered.

Among Youth (Entre Jóvenes)

In 2016, Glasswing began implementing Entre Jóvenes, an extracurricular club that aims to redefine traditional paradigms of masculinity and femininity by bringing together girls and boys in an open and Safe Space. Glasswing partners with public schools through their Community Schools model to implement afterschool programs including Entre Jóvenes. Glasswing engages community members and university partners as volunteers, providing them with training to serve as mentors and facilitators for the Entre Jóvenes club. In addition to the initial training, volunteers participate in ongoing activities such as supplementary workshops and movie forums to stay motivated, continue learning, and gain new strategies to better support their students.



THEORY OF CHANGE

How Glasswing's Programming Attempts to Shift Adolescent Gender Norms?

Glasswing's theory of change links personal transformation to systemic progress through three interconnected levels: individual empowerment, community engagement, and institutional change.

At the individual level, programming seeks to cultivate agency, empathy, and self-efficacy. Adolescents are guided to reflect on identity, emotional regulation, and social relationships through creative exercises and dialogue. They learn to name and question harmful behaviors—such as controlling relationships or rigid gender expectations—while envisioning healthier alternatives.

At the community level, Glasswing promotes collective reflection and action. Community Cafes bring together parents and family members at the school to share stories and problem solve strategies, learn constructive ways to empathize and engage with their children, and support themselves and their family members with coping strategies. These conversations generate ideas for small collective actions inside the school and in the surrounding community. These spaces model gender equitable behaviors and support youth leadership, reinforcing that gender equality benefits families and communities, not only individuals.

At the institutional level, Glasswing works in partnership with ministries of education, health, and youth to embed gender-sensitive content into public systems. Its Community Schools framework aligns with national curricula, while its SanaMente initiative trains educators and health professionals to recognize and address gendered dimensions of mental health and trauma. The organization's leadership describes systems change as a gradual, iterative process that requires "patience, persistence, and collaboration across all levels—policymakers, educators, and communities."

Through this multi-level strategy, Glasswing envisions the transformation of gender norms as an outcome of a broader effort to cultivate equitable, trauma-informed, and empathetic societies.

Research and Program Evaluations

Glasswing's programs have not yet been externally evaluated, but the organization has administered surveys connected with different projects funded by donors. Important insights can be gleaned from these program evaluations, including The Comic Relief Project (2024), which assessed Entre Jóvenes in El Salvador, Honduras, and

Guatemala, and found improvements in participants' self-esteem, leadership skills, and gender-equitable attitudes. Eighty-two percent of participants recognized gender inequality as a community issue, while 78 percent demonstrated more protective attitudes toward themselves and peers.

Another evaluation, The NoVo Foundation Diagnostic Report, documented sustained

shifts in participants' understanding of gender-based violence and self-worth, particularly among girls in high-violence areas. These findings were further supported by qualitative interviews, which highlighted how both male and female adolescents expressed greater respect for one another and described improved communication within families. Glasswing's internal monitoring and evaluation framework captures indicators related to gender beliefs and attitudes, self-efficacy, belonging, and civic engagement. While many of these measures are still being refined, they offer preliminary evidence that structured mentorship and reflective dialogue can gradually reshape beliefs and behaviors related to gender norms.

Promising Practices

Glasswing International's programming combines a Safe Spaces and community-based, and trauma-informed education model. Glasswing integrates its after school clubs into a holistic strategy that works to strengthen schools, engage families, and foster collective ownership of social change. Within this framework, programs such as Entre Jóvenes and Girls' Clubs are implemented as part of a set of interventions that attempt to address the academic, mental health, and social needs of adolescents, particularly those that have been impacted by violence. Since its founding, Glasswing has incorporated trauma-informed pedagogy because of the high levels of violence in Central America. Facilitators receive training in socio-emotional learning, mental health, and trauma awareness to create

safe, supportive environments for students. This approach addresses the psychological dimensions of gendered violence and helps adolescents develop emotional regulation and empathy—skills essential for building equitable relationships.

A key promising practice is Glasswing's integration within public systems. By embedding its programs in public schools and health networks, the organization enhances government capacity. This approach ensures sustainability and scale. Teachers, school administrators, and local education officials are involved in program design and implementation, helping to embed gender-responsive and trauma-informed practices within formal schools.

Another noteworthy feature of Glasswing's approach is its coeducational design with safe spaces. The organization pairs girls-only spaces—where adolescent girls can build confidence and leadership—with mixed-gender sessions that engage boys and men as partners in critically questioning norms around care, work, and education. These clubs also discuss healthy adolescent romantic relationships and critique gender-based violence. This dual structure helps address the relational nature of gender norms.

Finally, the organization's volunteer-led mentorship model is another strength. Glasswing has mobilized more than 150,000 volunteers, including alumni and community leaders. Engaging volunteers, particularly across socioeconomic divides, is intended to cultivate a sense of shared responsibility and local ownership. Mentors serve not only

as facilitators but also as role models who embody the values of empathy, respect,

and service, reinforcing the idea that social change is a collective process.

