

Global Youth Connect

Rwanda Program Report *Human Rights Delegation for Young Leaders December 31, 2008 – January 13, 2008*

Organized in Collaboration with Never Again – Rwanda



Pictures courtesy of Jesse Hawkes, Dillon Nichols and Matthias Resch

*Felibien, Maureen, Precious, Ben and Guillaine at the
Human Rights Learning Community Workshop*

Rwanda in 2008

The judge said that Matsibo¹ was accused of killing one person and of injuring another. One male witness stood up from the audience, seated on plastic chairs and wooden benches beside a youth center basketball court, and said: “I knew this man Matsibo, and I know that he participated in injuring the one person, but I do not know whether he then was involved in killing the other person.” At this point, the witness, the only person to speak either for or against Matsibo, finished his statement and promptly left the basketball court. He failed to return to hear the sentence, which was delivered by the panel of judges 30 minutes later: “Category II: 19 Years for Matsibo.”²

Matsibo’s case was judged on January 12, 2008, in the community of Nyamirambo in Kigali, Rwanda, under the jurisdiction of the *gacaca* court system. *Gacaca*, which literally means “on the grass” is a community-based justice process launched as a way of speeding up the trials of those accused of participating in the 1994 genocide. It also serves as a forum for community involvement in justice for crimes committed during the genocide.

While de-briefing after the visit to the *gacaca*, the delegation members of the January 2008 GYC program in Rwanda noted that they were perplexed by the system used to convict Matsibo on that day. The reflections they shared included the following concerns:

- The evidence seemed based on hearsay testimony;
- The judges asked a number of questions that didn’t seem to have anything to do with the case;
- The lack of lawyers present at the hearing;

¹ Matsibo is an invented name. The original names have been changed to protect privacy.

² The current categories under which people may be tried in the *gacaca* system are as follows: Category I - masterminds of genocide and rapists; Category II - participants in genocidal killings (both those who are forced to kill or who kill willingly); or Category III - looters/genocidal profiteering.

- The fact that the accused was not present at the trial to defend himself; and
- Classifying a person who had injured someone in the same categorization of crimes as someone who had killed another person.

At the same time, the delegates noted:

- “What other options do the Rwandans have at this point?”
- “The resources are so minimal, and the cases so many.”

The judgment of Matsibo, which was one of at least 12 cases tried in the span of 3 hours that day, highlights the current situation facing the Rwandan people. The country needs to progress quickly and surely, in the fields of economic and social development, but also in terms of justice. There is a need to ensure that a culture of impunity is never resurrected and that the rule of law is fully respected.

However, there can always be difficulties when moving too quickly in any field. Many core questions remain. Will the quick pace cause people to overlook some necessary components for reconciliation? Are there things that could be classified as human rights abuses that are being overlooked? According to whose definitions of “human rights” would we judge such “abuses”? Could these human rights abuses somehow be considered permissible given Rwanda’s particular situation and history? Is there any room for forgiveness?



*Genocide remembrance markers
at Nyarubuye Church*

Rwanda is definitely moving in the right direction. Since 2006, Global Youth Connect, in collaboration with Never Again-Rwanda, has led five human rights delegations to Rwanda, and we've taken note of the positive changes along the way. Considering the country's disastrous situation just 14 years ago, it is hard to overlook the achievements of the Rwandan people, both in government circles, civil society, and at the family and individual levels.

Despite the continued political difficulties between the Rwandan government and France, as well as the challenges, accusations, and international lawsuits brought forth by members of the Rwandan diaspora³, the country of Rwanda, led by President Paul Kagame, continues to progress and gain the respect and attention of international donors, investors, and world leaders like Bill Clinton, Bill and Melinda Gates, and Tony Blair.

But there are numerous moments where the quick pace seems to leave space for distrust and resentment, as well as possible failures. Accusations against the current administration for human rights abuses, such as violating freedom of the press, extrajudicial executions and arbitrary detention, continue to arise from international watchdogs like Human Rights Watch, as well as highlighted in the annual human rights reports published by the U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

There is great disparity in wealth in the economically booming country of Rwanda. Numerous testimonials from luminaries in the fields of public health and international development claim that today's infrastructure in Rwanda put in place by the current government will enable the country to launch into a middle-income economy in record time. Hence, Rwanda is a major focal point for international development aid, including the work of well-known international public health experts such as Dr. Paul Farmer of Partners in Health and Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University.

³ Many fled the country during the civil war and genocide of 1994 or defected afterwards.

It was into this ever-growing wealth of questions, challenges, and highlights that our human rights delegation delved. In a fast-paced, 2 ½ weeks, the 15 participants teamed up with young Rwandan activists in a human rights learning community workshop, visited numerous government, international, and local NGOs, stayed in the homes of Rwandan families, and spent time working on small projects with grassroots organizations in the field of human rights and socio-economic development. The delegation was once again co-organized in partnership with Never Again - Rwanda, and was facilitated by local GYC staff, volunteers, and other Rwandan organizations. The GYC group consisted of participants from places as far flung as Colorado, Minnesota, Kentucky, and New York City, including two participants with dual citizenship in the U.S., and Germany and Liberia, respectively. They were journalism and law students, sports players and business school graduates, non-profit workers and first-year college students. Each participant was passionate about learning more about the country of Rwanda. They shared an outrage and inquisitiveness about Rwanda's genocide and the current prospects and challenges for peace, healing, and the realization of human rights. As a group, they were all ready to engage in cross-cultural dialogue about human rights and to lend their talents to local NGOs in the field of human rights and development in a spirit of friendship and collaborative activism.

The jury is still out on the ultimate success of the Rwandan post-genocide experiment, but this GYC delegation certainly achieved its goal of encouraging dialogue by bringing open eyes and ears and caring, questioning voices together from the U.S., Rwanda, and other countries around the globe, in an attempt to assist Rwanda, and indeed the world, in achieving progress and peace.

First Impressions

by Patrick Finnegan

Rwanda's terrain is very distinctive, even from thirty thousand feet in the air. It is known as "*le pays des milles collines*" ("the land of the thousand hills") and the name is an apt description. While southern Kenya from above

appears to be dark green patches of foliage perforated by winding, dusty paths and large dry patches, I knew we were over Rwanda when the terrain changed to dramatic green hills punctuated by farmland and terracing, much like thick green carpeting.

I had reasons other than admiring Rwanda's natural beauty for being there. I was a member of Global Youth Connect's January 2008 human rights delegation.

We spent most of our time in Kigali, Rwanda's capital and largest city. It is very much a city where people make use of few resources; sheet metal serves as roofing, fencing and doors, scrap wood and branches serve as scaffolding, and broken glass cemented into the top of walls serve as barbed wire. It is also a very lively and vibrant city. There is new construction everywhere. Snack vendors, phone card sellers, and taxi drivers are seemingly on every block, always on the lookout for a sale. Motorcycle taxis weave in and out of traffic, passing between trucks, cars, and *matatus*. Groups of little children run to and fro, often, exclaiming "*Muzungu!*" and laughing when they see the mostly white members of our group. *Muzungu* is a Swahili word that refers to foreigners, specifically white people. While many children will beg for money, often they simply want to shake your hand.

The marketplace down the street from Centre Christus, the Catholic retreat center where we stayed most of the trip, is perhaps one of the busiest places I have ever been and it reminded me of similar marketplaces I had seen in South Africa. Stalls are densely packed into the market building and almost any conceivable item is available for purchase. It occurs to me now that this kind of marketplace probably represents the heart of the global economy for most people. We may be very used to large chain stores in the U.S., but this small-scale marketing is what sustains and supplies most people in the world.

I kept thinking as I walked through the streets of Kigali, how terrifying a thought it was that thirteen short years ago, these same streets now filled with busy, energetic, and well-dressed

people were saturated with blood and mutilated corpses. It hardly seems possible.

Orientation

Our first full day in Rwanda began with a visit to Never Again-Rwanda's peacebuilding center, where we met with leader Albert Nzamukwereka and other members of Never Again-Rwanda. We discussed cross-cultural issues related to foreigners traveling and working in Rwanda. For example, Rwandans may handle conflict different than we may have expected. Typically, they try to avoid addressing conflicts directly with one another, waiting a day or two to see if it will either blow over, or perhaps they will try to address it with a respected mediator. Holding hands or hugging while engaging in conversation in Rwanda is more common than in the U.S., especially between people of the same sex. We also discussed the safety concerns of the delegates, noting that Kigali is probably one of the safest capital cities in Africa, and even the world, in terms of personal street security. The session finished with a discussion about the various readings that the international delegates are asked to complete before coming to Rwanda, including selections from Ervin Staub's *Roots of Evil* and Mahmood Mamdani's *When Victims Become Killers*.

Kigali Memorial Center

Following the orientation session, the delegation toured the Kigali Memorial Center, the official genocide memorial located in Gisozi. After spending 2 hours inside, the group gathered on the cool stones at the center for a short de-brief session, and then spent the evening resting up for the start of the human rights workshop the following day.

"Going to see memorials is important both because it gives us a more well-rounded and real story of what happened during the genocide, and because it gives us a chance to show [our] respect."

--GYC Participant Reflection

More detailed descriptions of the memorial museum can be read in our previous program reports. The center continues to change and progress, now with movies playing in an upstairs room, offering the possibility to hear first-hand testimony from survivors regarding their experiences during the genocide and to see a feature film like *Sometimes in April* every Thursday and Saturday night.

Human Rights Learning Community

On December 31, GYC participants and Rwandan youth activists came together for the first of four days of a human rights workshop which provided an opportunity for dialogue and discussion, skill-building and the sharing of ideas.



Participants at the workshop presenting how their Rwandan organizations promote and protect human rights

Both the international and Rwandan participants had prepared five-minute presentations to greet their counterparts. The Rwandans truly outdid themselves by dressing in traditional clothing, encouraging the international delegates to join them in beautiful Rwandan dancing, and offering a small craft gift to each international participant. What the international participants lacked in preparation (they had only met each other the day before, and jet-lag played a factor, for sure) they made up for in enthusiasm, reciting a limerick greeting, chanting a wild Swahili song, and inciting their Rwandan counterparts to join them in dancing, as well to celebrate the opening of this special cross-cultural experience.

The goals of the workshop were:

- To learn more about “human rights” and explore a common definition of “human rights”;

- To identify important human rights problems and achievements in Rwanda, the U.S., and other countries around the world;
- To consider solutions to human rights problems in Rwanda, the U.S. and other areas of the world with an emphasis on Rwanda by discussing what is being done by the grassroots Rwandan organizations represented by participants at the workshop;
- To identify and develop skills to raise awareness and take action -- both together and individually -- so as to defend and achieve human rights; and
- To start taking action by presenting at least some of what we have learned and developed during the workshop to a public audience.



Discussing human rights together: GYC Program Assistant Naomi Sully and Never Again-Rwanda's Vianney Muvunyi

In reviewing the goals of the workshop, we placed great emphasis on the idea that we would be *exploring* a common definition of human rights, not *forcing* a common definition upon people. We wanted to see if it is possible for people from different cultures and backgrounds to agree upon some basic tenets and ideals.

To start, we asked very basic questions about the participants' notions of the definition of human rights and then asked them to discuss their definitions in small groups of 6 in various compositions -- some groups were gender specific, some nationality specific, and some mixed gender and mixed nationalities. The idea

was to see if there would be a notable difference between the definitions commonly agreed to in groups of varying backgrounds. Surprisingly, while there were some small differences between the responses, the various small groups agreed on a basic definition of human rights, generally speaking.



Discussing the U.S. perspective on human rights



Discussing the Rwandan perspective on human rights

Some questions we asked each other and ourselves included:

- In your opinion, what is the definition of the phrase “human rights”?
- Does the phrase “human rights” imply that there are a set of rights that are equal for all human beings regardless of background, origin, culture, tradition, gender, or any other category of difference?
- If you agree that there are at least *some* rights that are equal for all human beings regardless of difference, what are they?

Another eye-opening exercise analyzed the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and to what extent they were being achieved or not in Rwanda and in the U.S. Initially, all participants expressed, through an anonymous silent ballot, their opinions about a number of different UDHR articles, and specifically, they noted the percentage that they thought each article had been achieved in Rwanda and the U.S., respectively.

“In terms of a moment that impacted me, I’d have to point directly to the end of the workshop when we engaged in a very open and heated debate about human rights in Rwanda.

That was the moment when my eyes were really opened...and it helped me to understand the rest of my experience better.

I value that type of dialogue in my classes and to have it on a cross-cultural scale was even more interesting. [W]e were all able to be friends afterward...which was a relief.”

- GYC Participant Reflection

The results of this voting were analyzed, noting the nationality of the respondent in the analysis. It was interesting to note that the majority of both the Rwandan and U.S. participants felt that their own country performed better than the other in realizing Article 6 of the UDHR, the right to recognition as a person before the law. Most Americans were more critical than were the Rwandans of Rwanda’s realization of freedom of expression and opinion (UDHR Art. 19). However, it was interesting to see that all Rwandans thought that the U.S. had realized freedom of opinion in full 100%, whereas a sizable minority of Americans felt that there was still room for improvement in the U.S. in this regard.

Article 2, “freedom from discrimination,” sparked a deep discussion about how there can be laws in place to advance this freedom, whereas in everyday life, discrimination can persist. To the dismay of some of the Rwandans, the discussion led to the issue of ethnicity in Rwanda, and also to a potential rift in the workshop because some people felt that this subject should not be

discussed. However, understanding that the group was divided about whether to pursue discussing such a sensitive topic, the facilitators agreed to bring the subject up in an optional discussion session later in the workshop.

Discussion and consideration of Article 2 also inspired several participants to explore the issue of discrimination through theatre. Felibien Tuzayisenga and Precious Buxton created a two-person play about a young immigrant woman in the U.S. who experiences discrimination during a job interview. This stop-and-start forum theatre play allowed the audience members to intervene in the action to try to change the situation, sparking a discussion along the way. The play brought a great emotional depth to the discussion about discrimination and helped to diffuse some of the tension that had formed along national lines the day before.

In the context of these discussions, the participants prepared for what would happen on the final day of the workshop. They would open the doors of the workshop to visitors, including the national Rwandan television cameras and introduce them to what had taken place during the previous four days. Given that the discussion about freedom of expression in Rwanda had been one of the more tense discussions of the workshop, the fact that the workshop themes and conclusions were then going to be broadcast on television proved food for thought for all involved. It was interesting to note that the presenters of the topic of discrimination chose not to tell the camera that we had discussed the issue of ethnicity in Rwanda at the workshop, despite the fact that in the lead-up to the presentations everyone had said that this would be ok to do. Perhaps the presenters just ran out of time, as everything had begun late on that day.

Other sessions at the workshop included:

- Exploring what current Rwandan NGOs are doing to address many of the human rights issues facing Rwanda today. We explored the NGOs whose members were part of the workshop and who would be working with the international GYC volunteers at their organizations during our volunteer fieldwork.

- Discussions about human rights in Rwandan history and during the 1994 civil war, genocide and their aftermath.

Many participants mentioned that conversations that they had during the workshop, even during the tea break or at lunch, were some of the most rewarding experiences of the entire delegation.

Nyarubuye Genocide Memorial

One of the first documentary films made about the Rwandan genocide was *Valentina's Nightmare*. The film analyzes the Rwandan genocide through the lens of one young survivor named Valentina, from Nyarubuye. Having met Valentina on the summer 2007 delegation in Kigali as she was preparing to study English and nursing the U.S., GYC decided this time to journey to Nyarubuye Church in eastern Rwanda, near Tanzania.⁴



Exhibited personal items found among the remains of victims of the Nyarubuye massacre

⁴ If you would like a current update on Valentina's speaking engagements in the U.S., please contact GYC's Rwanda Program Director Jesse Hawkes at jesse@globalyouthconnect.org.

Nyarubuye Church

By Andrew Jordan

On top of one of the thousands of hills in the country of Rwanda lies Nyarubuye Church. Now, on Sundays, you can go there and find a congregation singing and dancing in their Sunday best. Fourteen years ago, however, you would have witnessed an entirely different scene altogether. During the Rwandan genocide, Nyarubuye played host to the slaughter of over twenty thousand individuals in the church and surrounding area. During our delegation to Rwanda, we made a visit to this site and the experience was truly profound.



The odd thing about Nyarubuye is its overpowering tranquility; it is a tremendously calm environment. This tranquility makes it hard to fathom some of the activities that occurred here less than twenty years ago. As you begin to cover the grounds, you are first taken to a wall with the names of some of those victimized etched into the wall. As you continue, there are several mass graves, now covered with flowers. Then you walk inside of a building, the nuns' former quarters that now houses hundreds of skulls, bags of bones, clothes taken from recently exhumed skeletons, and some of the weapons used to end the lives of these innocent people. If you walk outside you will see latrines that were used as a receptacle for infants as they were suffocated there, and right next to that is a fireplace that was used to cook hearts. One thing missing from the outside courtyard however is the gazebo that the UN tore down when they finally came in; it was used to rape women before they were murdered.

The last part of the grounds that our group visited was the church itself. The chapel is an impressive, tall brick building -- its bricks the same color red as the roads that wind up slowly but surely towards the church. Perhaps the most prominent feature of the church itself is a large white statue of the Virgin Mary centered on the building set about halfway up.

After a walk through the interior of the church, our group made its way out and back into the sunlight, and many of us simply sat, reflecting, and possibly trying to fathom what this place looked like not so long ago. Maybe wondering while we were in the church just how many bodies were cast down in the spots we had each been standing.

As we all finished our tour of the grounds and were sitting in different places around the front of the church, I stopped and started thinking. I thought of these reflections, and in further detail. My thoughts were so loud if I spoke I wouldn't have been able to hear my mouth, and when my mind began to slow down, I was hit with a wall of complete silence. Our usually vocal, laughing, and generally exuberant group was stone-faced and silent. I began to re-evaluate what I was thinking about and as I looked at the faces of those in my group it was clear what was on their mind -- sadness, anger, regret, remorse, confusion, curiosity, the list goes on.

Visiting a site such as Nyarubuye will overwhelm you with mental images and ideas that you have to at least try and process. This site visit for me was absolutely necessary -- some of the items, characteristics, and even the feel of the church I will never forget. I will especially remember the statue on the church, representing god in this world and still standing after seeing so much of the devil -- still standing and watching new generations of her children enter and exit her doors. Some people fancy using the expression, "If these walls could talk" -- how true, if only those walls and that statue could tell their story. Until then I suppose I will keep on trying to grasp the horrors on my own.

Rusumo Falls

After going to Nyarubuye, we made an effort to make it to the Tanzanian border to stop at the Rusumo Falls on the Akagera River. The only images of these impressive falls seen by most foreigners coming to Rwanda are contained in the video filmed by Fergal Keane, author of *Valentina's Nightmare*. These images depict the river flowing with bodies in 1994. A tributary of the Nile, the Akagera became a receptacle for bodies as the *genocidaires* emphasized the notion that Tutsis had come from the north of Ethiopia and that they should be sent back to where they came from. While it was late in the day and the border was officially closed, the guards let us walk out into the neutral zone on the bridge above the river and the falls, where we took in the scene amidst the spray from below.

Kirehe Health Center & Partners in Health

One of the most respected people in the field of international development and specifically the field of treating HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis is Dr. Paul Farmer. Subject of the biography, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, Dr. Farmer first developed his community-based methods for the treatment of HIV/AIDS and TB in Haiti. Now, after receiving a strong push from the Clinton Foundation, Dr. Farmer's U.S.-based NGO, Partners in Health (PIH), has laid down strong roots in Rwanda, partnering with the Rwandan government in the eastern region of the country. There they've created one full-fledged, technologically sophisticated, and expensive hospital at Rwinkwavu, as well as a refurbishment and support system for other health centers in the same area, specifically one in Kirehe, on the way to the Tanzanian border.

The GYC delegation had the pleasure of visiting the Kirehe hospital, receiving a tour from Emmanuel Ahishakiye, a translator for the head doctor at the hospital and one of GYC's Rwandan participants in the human rights workshop. Emmanuel explained that when Partners in Health first came to Kirehe, the health center had only 16 staff people, and no doctors, as per the

Rwandan law that doctors could only be present at hospitals, not health centers. PIH immediately made the health center into a pseudo-hospital and has since started to build a larger hospital on the grounds nearby. PIH is working to bring in one foreign and five Rwandan doctors, along with a wealth of other staff. The wards are organized according to age, illness (including the infectious disease ward), and also gender. The hospital receives 100 out-patients and 35 in-patients per day. Besides HIV, another major problem in the area is malnutrition, with 3-4 children visiting the hospital per day to receive treatment.



GYC participants at Kirehe Health Center

Emmanuel described how PIH's methods work: community health workers (known as *accompagnateurs* in French and as companions in English) tour around the community to follow-up on HIV+ individuals who are on anti-retroviral drugs, to ensure that they are adhering to the regimen of their drugs. Even though ARV treatment is now supposedly available to all people who require it in Rwanda (true, for the most part), not all people adhere to the drugs the way they must in order that they be effective.

"It's nice to see what a group effort can do to really benefit and change a small community in a large way."

--GYC Participant Reflection

Partners in Health's methods are in some ways very simple, focusing on this need for adherence and attention to people who live in the community. Often the most needed methods and changes are actually very simple, including Dr. Farmer's insistence that all health centers he works in or refurbishes feel like a home, which accounts for the well-tended gardens throughout the Kirehe Health Center. When patients find out

that they are HIV+ and start taking the anti-retroviral drugs, they are put on a 6-month food support program that helps them gain the strength they need to take the drugs. At the time of our visit to the hospital, at least ten people were in line at the meal dispensary, with plastic buckets in hand to collect their food and take it home with them.



GYC Participants walk the grounds of the Kirehe Health Clinic

Another positive effect the hospital has on the people living with HIV and on the community at large is the reduction in stigma associated with being HIV+. Now that the hospital has shown that it cares deeply about helping PLWHA, the patients say that they are feeling more welcome in their own communities, more than just on the health center's grounds.

USAID

On January 10, the GYC participants had the chance to meet with both Rwandan and U.S. representatives from the Democracy and Governance Team at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). We were briefed on the level of support USAID grants to Rwanda (\$180 million annually, up from just \$30 million 3 years ago, an increase attributable to the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which accounts for \$160 million per year currently). We also learned more about the way USAID is staffed: approximately 60 Rwandan employees, 5 U.S. government employees, and approximately 20 U.S. consultants at any given time.

USAID is not a direct implementer of projects, but partners with the Rwandan government,

contractors, and civil society organizations to carry out a variety of programs -- from legislative drafting to economic development, as well as supporting education and reconciliation efforts, including the Ingando Solidarity Camps and radio soap operas devoted to reconciliation in Rwanda and the Great Lakes Region. Another timely project is the Land Titling and Registration Project, which focuses on mitigating conflicts arising over land tenure rights and also the expropriation of land by the government under previous land laws.

"It was important to see what the international community was doing and to open our eyes to the reality of international and U.S. government intervention in humanitarian issues."

-- GYC Participant Reflection

In addition, the USAID representatives discussed the Millennium Challenge Program that was established to provide a "score card" and compacts with governments around the world based on three main areas: ruling justly, economic freedom, and investing in people. If a country scores highly, it is eligible for major funding through a "compact." If a country scores at a threshold level, it can receive a certain amount of support so as to allow it to improve its indicator scores and advance to compact eligibility. The USAID representatives said that currently Rwanda is at the threshold level. It has passed the "investing in people" and "economic freedom" categories, but under the "ruling justly" category, Rwanda needs to improve its democracy indicators on "voice and accountability, political rights, and civil liberties," in order to become eligible for a compact, according to the representatives we met.

Nsanga Association

On a hill in a rural suburb of Kigali rests a large *umudugudu* ("neighborhood") of recently constructed homes for survivors of the Rwandan genocide. Some of the homes are reserved for the members of the Nsanga Association of Child-Headed Households (homes run by orphans of the genocide). Having been taken under the wing of Never Again-Rwanda, the Nsanga Association is

full of young people yearning for opportunities to study and progress in life.



GYC participants and Jacques Sezikeye at the Nsanga Association

The GYC delegation was welcomed by about sixty young people, including the president of the Association, Jacques Sezikeye, who is also the president of the entire *umudugudu* as well. We toured around the village, discussing the way the association members live without electricity, but with much passion for life and an appreciation for the activities initiated there by Never Again-Rwanda and international volunteers -- activities including English and yoga classes. The young people reported that the yoga classes have been giving them a new way to deal with the many stresses and traumas that they face in their lives. After touring around the village, participants played with the younger kids in Jacques' front yard, and then strolled up the hill to a local restaurant to share a soda and chat with the older youth from the association. After the visit, several participants who would be volunteering with Never Again-Rwanda had a chance to work on bettering the English curriculum for the Nsanga program.

National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

Given the level of discord that brought about, and that resulted from, the Rwandan civil war and genocide of 1994, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) has an immense role to play in Rwanda's future. The NURC was established even before the 1994 Rwandan genocide, in theory, in the Arusha Peace Accords of 1993. However, it was not

enacted in reality until March 1999 when it began grassroots consultations about the main issues facing Rwandans with regards to unity and reconciliation.

Following the consultations, various programs were introduced, including the highly-touted Ingando Solidarity Camps which, according to Frank Kobucyeye, Director of Peace Building and Conflict Management at the commission, "help Rwandans to become good citizens," and install community mediators at the local levels across the country. Other successes noted by Mr. Kobucyeye in our meeting were the *gacaca* courts and the power-sharing clause in the constitution which does not allow for any of the three top posts in government (President, Head of Parliament, and Head of Senate) to be from the same political party.



NURC's Director of Peacebuilding Frank Kobucyeye with U.S. participants Alicia Graves & Claire Pelley, Never Again-Rwanda's Albert Nzamukwereka, and GYC Special Program Assistant Pascal Ruberwa

Mr. Kobucyeye noted some challenges:

- The genocide ideology is not gone;
- Some survivors have been killed after testifying in *gacacas* (or even before testifying at a *gacaca*); and
- The sheer magnitude of the crimes committed in the country, which make the achievement of justice and reconciliation very difficult.

Moreover, at the time of the GYC visit, numerous Rwandan schools were being investigated by the Rwandan parliament for having allowed genocidal ideologies to perpetuate and even spread among their students, teachers, and administrations.

The NURC has an open mandate. It will continue to exist as long as the Rwandan government deems it necessary. Mr. Kobucyeye indicated that one of the newest additions to the NURC's activities is a radio program called *Intorero*, which is meant to emphasize the same values as the Ingando Solidarity Camps, and to mentor all Rwandan people through the radio waves. The structure of the radio program is yet to be determined, but on the weekend following the GYC visit, the program most likely included an interview with GYC Rwanda Program Director, Jesse Hawkes, who answered a young journalist's questions, which included: "So what will you tell the rest of the world about the National and Unity and Reconciliation Programs? And what do you think is the key for Rwanda to bring about reconciliation?"

Gacaca Observation

Despite the fact that the *gacaca* system was slated to finish all of its cases by the end of 2007, we had the opportunity to observe a *gacaca* in Nyamirambo, one of the communities that had been granted permission to finish its caseload in 2008. It seemed the *gacaca* in Nyamirambo wasted no time in trying the remaining cases. Next to a basketball court at a youth center in Nyamirambo, the GYC delegation, assisted by 6 Rwandan workshop participants who served as translators and supporters, sat down with about 35 local people to observe the proceedings of the discussion and judging of no less than 12 cases in a single morning session.

All of the cases concerned people who had been accused during the research period of the *gacaca* courts in 2005, but who had never shown their faces at a *gacaca* court. Therefore, several of the cases were now ready to be judged and sentenced, even if the person did not show up. None of the accused were there that day. Only the witnesses, both pre-registered witnesses and

those spontaneously announced by raising their hand in the audience, gave testimony and answered questions from the local *gacaca* judges who were comprised of honorable and respected members of the local community.

It would be too difficult to enumerate all 12 cases that were brought before the *gacaca* on that day. However, several were of note, particularly given the fact that there was no real evidence presented in them, and judges' presentations were often disorganized. Yet some of the accused still received 19-year Category II sentences. One such case concerned a man named Matsibo described in the introduction to this program report.

In another case, a woman described how her husband and son were killed by the accused man, who is now missing. The woman was the only witness present for the case. She spoke about how her husband and child were taken after several passes by the local *interahamwe* militias, who collected money each time, enabling the husband and child to survive until the accused came to take the husband and child away. Written testimony had also been submitted stating, "The accused would always tell stories about how people were being killed and I heard that he had killed one of my friends."

The judges did not ask the woman many follow-up questions, such as "How did you survive? How did you escape?" Instead, the judges said, since the accused is not here, we will just make a judgment based on the current testimony. The woman verbally confirmed that the accused had killed her husband and son, and the absent man got 19 years in jail as a sentence when the judges finally commented decisively on all of the cases at the end of the morning.

Another case, which was not ultimately decided on that day, was still one of the most drawn out and perplexing. In fact, about halfway through the questioning and testimony, it became clear that the judges had mixed-up the names of the victim and the accused. They then switched the names without blinking an eye.

A Rwandan's Testimonial

At the debriefing session following the visit to the *gacaca*, a Rwandan friend of GYC, who chose to remain anonymous, described his own situation: "I am a survivor of the genocide, but after testifying at *gacaca*, I too was given a sentence of one year (two months prison, several month community service, and then house arrest). After my father was killed, I had been in a situation where I was foraging for food for some of my family members, and I found a house where an older woman had been living, but I didn't see her inside. When I left the house, I was surrounded by *interahamwe* militia and they went into the house and found the old woman in hiding and then pulled her outside and told me to kill her. I refused, and they insisted that I do something or else I would be killed. They pushed a steel stick at me to use to kill her. I refused again. I could not bear the thought of killing her just to save myself. Then the old woman told me to kill her because it was the only way that I would be able to live, she said. I refused again. Finally, I agreed only to beat the woman with the steel stick. I accepted to beat her but not kill her and I continued to beg them to release me and her while beating her.

After beating her twice I threw down the stick, hoping they would not kill either of us, but then they killed the old woman. The *interahamwe* men had become so overwrought that they killed her themselves which allowed me to escape back to my family, fearing that we would be next in line to die. Luckily they did not come for us. When I told the court about this story, the son of the woman I had beaten decided to forgive me completely, and publicly, for this beating, but still the court sentenced me as a Category II (the same category as killers).^[1] This might destroy my reputation, any chances for a government job in the future, and now I will go to prison where I could be killed by the militia members who are in the prison and who heard that I testified about them when they killed my father.

When I was there at the *gacaca*, a community mediator told me something about an appeal, but he didn't specify the time that I would have to appeal (or perhaps I was too traumatized by the guilty verdict to remember correctly this issue of the appeal, and he may have told me). In fact, after the genocide I had actually been thrown in prison for 4 months for no reason at all, and this fact alone, if presented within 15 days of my sentence, could have commuted that portion of my sentence, so that I would be safe now at least from the prisoners, but since I didn't know about the appeal, I lost my chance. If I had known/remembered that I could protect myself in any way by appealing or providing evidence, I would have tried to offer such evidence. I was so shocked and angry and traumatized that I didn't even think about the appeal. I was very discouraged that I really forgot and didn't think about it until recently. I had seen many injustices at previous trials so I had lost faith in the system and this is one reason why I failed to appeal."

^[1] On page 11 of GYC's Summer 2006 Rwanda Program Report, we list the categories under which those accused of participating in the 1994 Genocide have been tried and sentenced in Rwanda's *gacaca* court system. Since that time, the *gacaca* law has changed to combine the second and third categories into one, putting "those who took an immediate and active role in killing people" and "those who injured or who killed when forced to do so" into the same category: Category II. The reason for this change is that the Government has abolished the death penalty and therefore it will be allowed to try the Category I Genocidal Mastermind crimes in the *gacaca* system (whereas before, all Category I cases were tried in a court of law or had been taken by the ICTR International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania). Critics of the change charge that the stigma and sentences attached to the former Category II now apply to people who committed lesser offenses, unjustly punishing them too forcefully.

Before the case was over, the main witness in the case mentioned that another witness is still alive and is staying somewhere not too far from Kigali. The judge asked him to provide the telephone number for the new witness and a long silence reigned as the witness perused his mobile phone's address book before announcing the number. The judges then stated, "You know, if we call him and tell him to come here and then he doesn't come, we are going to punish you for telling him to beware ... OK?" At this point, the witness was moving toward the back of the hall, fidgeting for his cigarettes.

After the testimonies were over, the judges left the premises and gathered in a nearby private room to discuss the cases further. During this period, the judges surprisingly invited GYC Rwanda Program Director Jesse Hawkes to visit with them, share a fanta and ask them any questions about anything at all related to the cases, which were still yet to be sentenced. Out of politeness, Jesse sat with them for a few minutes, but he didn't drink anything and didn't ask any questions, trying to remain as non-invasive as possible.

As opposed to previous GYC *gacaca* observations (see previous program reports) where the accused were present to defend themselves, where fewer cases were tried, and where there seemed to be some respect for the idea that a person is innocent until proven guilty, this *gacaca* session had a different feel, highlighting even more the limitations of the *gacaca* system: excessive numbers of accusations and cases, and an almost casual, informal, or at least multi-directional/scattered atmosphere that contrasts with the levity of the crimes.

At the GYC debriefing, Naomi Sully, GYC Special Program Assistant for the delegation, who had taken the opportunity to return to Rwanda with GYC to pursue her thesis research on the *gacaca* system in Rwanda, mentioned that that there were 900,000 suspects originally accused in the *gacaca* data collection period back in 2004. She explained, "Now, however, they have tried over one million people, as many cases lead to others." Naomi also said that every Wednesday, people can go to speak with the

gacaca head office and register complaints. In other words, there is at least some way to highlight problems and concerns, even if there may be too many of them to handle.

Fieldwork with Rwandan Organizations

Volunteer service to grassroots organizations working in the field of human rights was a significant part of the GYC delegation's activities. The following is a summary of the organizations we worked with in January and a brief description of the work undertaken by GYC participants.

AMANI-Africa

www.africagrassroots.org

Amani's mission is to build and support a community of children and youth who are actively promoting and protecting human rights. They provide opportunities for these children and youth through educational support, peace-building and conflict resolution education, extracurricular activities like sporting events, drama and debates, often with a focus on HIV/AIDS and other health related concerns in addition to reconciliation and social harmony. Volunteer activities included:

- Creating an internship guidebook;
- Developing a fundraising handbook; and
- Drafting a conflict resolution handbook.

Center for Information and Social Mobilization (CIMS)

CIMS' current mission is to research how the land reform laws in Rwanda are being obeyed or disobeyed, so that people can realize their land rights. CIMS says that the land issue is the most important issue related to civil harmony in Rwanda because it is so integral to the lives of the majority of the people in Rwanda who are agriculturalists, many of whom were dislocated during the 1994 genocide and the preceding civil war and strife and who returned to find their land taken over.

CIMS also leads conflict management sessions for community members so that they can resolve their disputes concerning land rights peacefully, and according to the laws.

Volunteer activities included meeting with organizers and helping put together a document more concisely describing the organization's past work and future goals to be used for fundraising and publicity purposes.

“The issues CIMS deals with are very important issues and getting to go out into the field was a really great way of seeing the reality of Rwandan culture, society and the role of NGOs in that mix. I learned a great deal about what it means to do advocacy work and also got to meet Rwandans who devoted not only their lives but also their personal money to the causes they work for. It was very encouraging to see Rwandans working for their own people at a grass-roots level, and I really enjoyed the opportunity to meet and learn from such devoted, hard working people.”

-- GYC Volunteer for CIMS

Global Grassroots

www.globalgrassroots.org

One of the volunteer experiences during the January 2008 delegation was unplanned. Global Grassroots is a U.S. NGO which, as its name implies, encourages social entrepreneurship at the grassroots level in several conflict zones around the world. Having established themselves in Rwanda in 2006 with several small scale projects, Global Grassroots needed some volunteer assistance as well and when there was some time available several of the GYC participants provided assistance on one of their projects.

Haguruka

www.haguruka.org.rw

Haguruka, which means “rise up,” provides legal aid focusing on women and children's rights, but also on marriage and succession issues. On average they see 4,000 cases annually, some of them referred to Haguruka by other NGOs. Volunteer activities included:

- Drafting a template for a grant proposal that Haguruka can use to seek funding from foundations for the domestic violence prevention initiative they are currently undertaking, an initiative specifically aimed at trying to help raise funds for the building of a new center to house victims of domestic violence while their cases are brought to trial;
- Research on potential foundations that might be interested in funding this initiative; and
- Translation of the proposal template into French.

Never Again-Rwanda

www.neveragainrwanda.org

Never Again-Rwanda aims to alert the international community to both the causes of and effects of genocide and to facilitate the exchange of ideas between young people - those who have lived through genocide and those who wish to learn from them.

“I went to an orphan headed village to try and help them with an English program and just seeing how much they sacrifice just to help each other made me realize what a true model they should be for others when times are tough.”

- GYC Participant Reflection

Volunteer activities included:

- Review of the English curriculum for child-headed houses (in collaboration with the Nsanga Association);
- Brainstorming new projects including a “coffee house” reconciliation project for university campuses, in which coffee houses would be established and artistic and social activities aimed at facilitating reconciliation could be carried out; and
- Editing a report/proposal for the international expansion of the Focus Pressure Action (FPA) project that aims to activate youth around issues of social concern (such as the

Genocide in Darfur) and to apply pressure on the general public, local and international governments to take action.

Sisters of Rwanda

www.sistersofrwanda.org

Sisters of Rwanda, sometimes referred to as “Sisters,” is a Rwandan non-profit organization dedicated to breaking the cycle of prostitution in Rwanda by ending gender-based violence and empowering women through education, career opportunities, counseling, health care, and spiritual support. Volunteer activities included:

- Assisting in the creation and editing of a legal handbook (educational manual) to educate the Sisters about Rwandan law and their rights; and
- Brainstorming ideas about how to better market and sell the crafts made by the Sisters.

Uyisenga N'Manzi

Uyisenga N'Manzi aims to contribute to the psychological and economic rehabilitation of unaccompanied children affected by HIV/AIDS and genocide as well as young girls who were victims of rape or other forms of sexual violence. Volunteer activities included:

- Supporting the School Materials Program by conducting field research and interviews; and
- Drafting a project proposal to convince Uyisenga's donors to increase funding for the purpose of providing all children who are attending school with necessary school materials.

Fieldwork Reflection

By Reisha Fryzer

One of my most memorable experiences in Rwanda was working with Global Grassroots, under the direction of Gretchen Wallace and further local guidance from Allison Huggins and Gyslaine Witonze. Global Grassroots invests in social entrepreneurship to advance women's

wellbeing in poor and conflict torn countries. They are currently working on four projects within Rwanda.

The project I was most involved with is called HARANIRA UBUZIMA, meaning “Work For Life.” Sixteen women were granted \$1,232, and their social impact plans to reach 1,750 to 2,250 people. The project addresses the issue of limited and unreliable access to clean water in their community. The extremely limited capacity results in hours of waiting for one's daily supply of water, causing job tardiness and lack of school attendance.

These 16 women are installing a water tank on land donated to them by their local church. Here they will tap into the local piping system, gaining access to clean and more readily available water for 250 local households. While the women have installed the water tank, they have unfortunately underestimated costs in other areas of the project. Global Grassroots is not responsible for additional funds and encourages the women to think up new ideas.

An afternoon was dedicated to a workshop for creative financing that I lead with another GYC delegate, Alicia Graves. This hands-on experience really opened my eyes to the strength, frustration, and courage the women possess. I really enjoyed my experience and plan to keep in touch with the organization.

U.S. Participant Biographies

Eric Brinkert

After having graduated from Claremont McKenna College and majored in government with an international relations focus, Eric is now a first year Masters of Arts candidate in conflict resolution at Georgetown University. While at Claremont McKenna College, Eric studied and traveled with Holocaust and ethics scholar Dr. John K. Roth. Post-graduation, he attended the International Summer Program on the Holocaust (ISPH) and worked for the Close Up Foundation, the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan civic education organization. Having spent much of his undergraduate experience studying the Holocaust, Eric is excited to continue his education on human rights issues in a more contemporary setting.

Precious Buxton

After experiencing the Liberian civil war, Precious moved to the United States and now majors in international relations at Kentucky Wesleyan College. Currently, she works in the Kentucky Wesleyan Plus Center and Development Office. She is passionate about international affairs, politics and world history, and she strives to help people understand that what makes us all different is not a bad thing. Precious hopes to bring awareness to the affects that war has on the youth of the world.

Courtney Eskew

Courtney studies International Relations at Rhodes College, in Memphis, TN and currently works as a fellow for the Crossroads to Freedom Project, which documents the Civil Rights Movement through a digital archive and fosters community conversations. After interning last summer at the Memphis Center for Reproductive Health, she continues to volunteer at the organization as serves as its liaison for the campus. Courtney holds several leadership positions on the boards of V-DAY and STAND advocating for human rights. While participating in an "Urban Plunge," she spent the weekend living with members of Atlanta's homeless community and found that the greatest insight is often found in places that go unnoticed. In the spring of 2007, Courtney was on the Dean's List, and she has served as a Delegate to the National Youth Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. Coming from a cultural society often associated with injustice itself, she hopes to meet people and leaders in Rwanda who have survived intolerances

she has not yet been exposed to. Further, she wants to learn how to spread the vision that people can think globally and act locally with her peers.

Erica Finkle

Erica is now in her second year at Columbia Law School (CLS) and plans to be a human rights lawyer. Her experience in Columbia's Tenants Rights Project reinforced her desire to use her legal training to help provide natural rights to those who are underrepresented and disregarded in the political and legal processes. Erica is the events coordinator for the CLS chapter of Amnesty International, and the staff editor for the *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*. She has attended numerous Model United Nations conferences. She graduated from Cornell University in May 2006.



Taking in a soccer match

Patrick Finnegan

Patrick is the Development Coordinator at the Human Rights Center in the University of Minnesota Law School. His primary responsibilities include grant writing and events coordination. He graduated summa cum laude from the University of Minnesota in 2005, with a B.A. in global studies and minors in history and French. He wrote his summa thesis on the human right to water in Ghana in the context of structural adjustment. Patrick plans to engage in a career of public service with an international human rights focus, and plans to continue his studies in public policy or related fields.

Reisha Fryzer

Reisha is currently finishing her last semester at Boston University's School of Management, where

she is majoring in Business Administration and minoring in Art History. Outside of the classroom, Reisha is an intern at the Institute of Contemporary Art, and she is also very active in her district's Amnesty International group. Before transferring to Boston University, Reisha studied at Pace University, where she participated in the community service program and volunteered in the alternative spring break program. As a part of this program, she traveled to Washington, DC, to help build an affordable housing unit and to discuss homelessness and hunger with local senators and congressmen at Capitol Hill. At Boston University, Reisha has continued to volunteer and be active in her local community. After graduating in December, Reisha hopes to move to Paris and to study International Relations and French at the Sorbonne University. She also hopes to work for an NGO and/or with an art auction house or gallery.

Alicia Graves

At 15 years old, Alicia decided that she wanted to commit her life to public interest work. After graduating from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH, with a degree in psychology and American studies, she began attending the University of Akron School of Law. Alicia believes it is imperative to raise awareness of human rights issues so that society may progress in a positive manner. She plans to support societal change by practicing law and spreading awareness to others about major issues across the world. She has received mediation training, and looks forward to bringing her conflict resolution oriented skills and positive attitude to the delegation in Rwanda.

Lindsay Heppe

Lindsay recently graduated from the University of Puget Sound with a politics and government degree, with an emphasis in international relations. Lindsay focused on security issues ranging from counterterrorism to ethnic conflict, and wrote her senior thesis on the importance of soft power and diplomatic engagement in the "War on Terror". Lindsay studied abroad in the Czech Republic, where she focused on the political and economic transformation of the country and achieved a more thorough understanding of Eastern European political systems after their transition from communism to democracy. She is now studying Arabic at Thomas Nelson Community College in order to prepare for a future profession with the U.S. State Department, the United Nations, or a

private counterterrorism agency. By going to Rwanda, Lindsay hopes to develop her interpersonal skills within a different culture and to learn more about the reconciliation processes of post-conflict countries. She hopes to apply her new knowledge to an upcoming internship at the Protection Project, where she will be monitoring human rights issues in the Middle East, as well as future global issues that deal with reconciliation processes and political transitions.

Andrew Jordan

A sophomore at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Andrew is majoring in political science. Last year, he was on the Dean's List and he is an officer in the Political Science Association at UH Hilo. In 2008, Andrew will be doing his upper level studies in political science at Essex University in the United Kingdom, focusing on courses in human rights and British politics. Originally from Oregon, Andrew was an active athlete in high school and is a Bike Officer for the Redmond Police Department every summer. He is anxious to travel and do something positive in the world. He is currently taking a class at the Native Hawaiian Student Center that teaches culture from a Hawaiian perspective, which challenges Andrew to look at his own culture. He is also interested in international law and cross-cultural communication.



Andrew Jordan and Matthias Resch with host brother Evode and host mom Maria

Grace Marengo Sanchez

Grace is an anthropology major, with a concentration in global development studies at Grinnell College. After traveling in and studying about the violence of the 70s and 80s in Latin America (specifically in Guatemala and El Salvador), Grace is interested in seeking out cross-cultural dialogue about similar ethnic conflicts in

other parts of the world. She is a coordinator for Grinnell's Alternative Break program, which sends all student run, service and learning based trips all over the country during fall, winter and spring breaks. She is also involved with the Catholic Worker House movement from her hometown. After graduating Grace hopes to continue her education outside the classroom through travel, dialogue and continuing to be an advocate through grass roots organizing.



Maggie Muhire and Dillon Nichols

Dillon Nichols

Dillon will graduate from the University of Southern California with a degree in political science and Spanish. As a member of the Sigma Chi Fraternity, Dillon was elected to serve on the Undergraduate Student Government as Greek Senator and Speaker Pro Tempore of the Senate. Last summer, Dillon traveled to Lima, Peru, with Cross Cultural Solutions to tutor children (8-14 years) and to work in an impoverished shantytown in Villa El Salvador. He founded the Project for Umbilical Cord Stem Cells at USC, a student organization dedicated to promoting the use and research of stem cells obtained from umbilical cord blood. After graduating from college, Dillon plans to apply to the Peace Corps and to work in Latin America, and later to go to law school to study international law.

Claire Pelley

Claire is a senior at the University of Denver where she is studying journalism with focus on the developing world. She is also completing minors in international studies and creative writing. For the past three years she has been a DJ at DU's radio station KVDU where she plays underground and indie music and reports off-beat news. Claire is also a Features Editor and Staff Writer for the Clarion, DU's student newspaper. Currently, she

holds an internship position at University Communications at DU where she works on the website. Claire is also involved with a Goodwill program that helps teach recently arrived high-school age refugees English and acclimatizes them to life in the United States so that they can more smoothly enter the formal school system. In her free time she helps organize events for local and national groups including Invisible Children, Wheels of Justice and Argus Fest.

Matthias Resch

Matthias is a dual German-US citizen with a four-year German degree in business management. He is very interested in international development cooperation, emergency relief, international peace and security, human rights, and the international System (UN, World Bank). For the past three years, he has worked at Bayern LB, a German Bank in New York City. Last year, he interned at ATHGO International United Nations Symposium in New York as a facilitator for participants and liaison between organizers and students. In 2005, Matthias earned a certificate in global affairs at NYU. He is now pursuing a Master's in International Political Economy and Development and a Master's in Economics at Fordham University, from where he also holds a Certificate in Emerging Markets and Political Risk Assessment. In 2007 he attended the European Public Affairs and Advocacy Institute in Brussels. Matthias has work and study experience overseas and he has traveled extensively on all continents. He is now looking to shift his career from the private sector to the public sector.

Tyler Satterlund

Tyler grew up in western Washington and now studies political science at Hamline University in St. Paul, MN, with a focus on Africa. He spent his spring semester last year in Kenya and Tanzania studying Swahili and the culture of Kenyan and Tanzanian coastal peoples. In the winter of 2006, he volunteered at Kakuma Refugee Camp, in conjunction with Kenya Voluntary Development Association and the UNHCR. While at the camp, Tyler volunteered with tree planting in a local community, and worked with refugee youth regarding sexual education, repatriation, foreign culture and policy, and conflict resolution. After graduating, Tyler plans to work for an NGO concerned with human rights and the easing of ethnic tension.

Maureen Weiland

After having lived in Europe for nine years, traveled to Australia and studied abroad in South Africa in the summer of 2006, Maureen is now a junior at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT. She is a double major in Political Science and Philosophy, but she also studies in the Economics Department and in her university's Honors College. She currently works as a Montana State Admissions Office Representative and as a Peer Advisor in the Montana State Study Abroad Office. Maureen is very active in her student government on campus, and she is now a Senator who represents the Off-Campus district. After graduating from college, she plans to attend law school and pursue a career in International Law or Public Policy. She is particularly interested in the rift between the Global North and South and in doing work to help change these disparities through better political and economic policymaking. Maureen hopes that by learning what the needs of foreign developing countries are, she can shape her future work to aid in obtaining these goals.

Rwandan Participant Biographies

SITINI Bertin

Bertin is a 27 year- old, fourth year medical student at the National University of Rwanda and coordinator of AERG/UNR, a survivor students' association.

NDUNGU Morgan

Morgan is 27 years old and has worked for Association Rwandaise pour le Droit de l'Homme (ARDHO) since 2006. He has a university diploma in economics at Kigali Independent University (ULK). Morgan has also participated in a two-month school training at DUTERIMBERE in March 2007.

TUYISENGE Lise Eugenie

At 19 years old, Lise Eugenie is a member of Nsanga Association. She has also been a leader of an AIDS awareness club in secondary school.



Vianney Muvunyi from NA-R and Lise Eugenie Tuyisenge

KAWERA Sylvia

Sylvia is 19 years old, and she studies at FAWE girls school.

MUHIRE Maggie

At 24 years old, Maggie is the chairperson at the University Women Student's Association (UWSA). She is a third year social work student at the National University of Rwanda. Maggie has also worked for the World Vision/ Rwanda program in the valley dam project in the Eastern province of Rwanda.

SEZIKEYE Jacques

Jacques is the President of the Nsanga Association, and is also a student at Kigali Independent University. He is currently writing his thesis on the political party system in Rwanda.

KARANGANWA Fredrick Hendrick

Frederick is 25 years old, and works at Never Again-Rwanda as a legal advisor. He earned his law Bachelor's degree at the National University of Rwanda.

TUZAYISENGA Felibien

Felibien has a university degree in interpreting and translation, and now works for Next Generation Connect as a deputy director. He is 24 years old.

AHISHAKIYE Emmanuel

Emmanuel is a translator at Partners in Health-Rwanda. He has an A2 diploma delivered by Saint Andrew College, and he is 25 years old.



Emmanuel Ahishakiye and Sylvia Mbabazi

MBABAZI Sylvia

Sylvia is 25 years old, and she is a public relations officer in an education forum. She received her Bachelor's degree in business administration (BBA) from UNILAK.

GULLAINE Neza

Neza is 21 years old and works for Youth Crime Watch of Rwanda as a secretary. She has earned her Bachelor's degree A1 in computer engineering at KIST.

KIZITO Safari

Safari is a lawyer currently working for Haguruka in Musanze, Rwanda. He is a graduate of the National University of Rwanda, with a Bachelor's degree in law.

FURAHA Jackson

Furaha Jackson is a Rwandan who was born in Uganda and who returned to Rwanda in 1994. In 2006, he graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Law from the National University of Rwanda in Butare and did an internship with the "Parquet General" of Rwanda. Jackson has been working with Sisters of Rwanda as a legal consultant, carrying out research on Rwandan law related to women's rights. His future plans include completing a Master's Degree in Human Rights Law and becoming a prosecutor. Jackson is fluent in many languages: French, English, Swahili, and Kinyarwanda.

MUGABE Isaac

Isaac is 23 years old and has a bachelor's degree in law from ULK. He is a survivor of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and is currently heading a household that includes himself and his three young brothers. In October 2007, he presented his research project on genocide in which he demonstrated how the International Community failed to adequately prevent the genocide and how the international principle of Never Again has not been respected. Isaac's testimonies about his experiences during the genocide have been published on the Aegis Trust website (www.aegistrust.org) and in the book called: "A Time to Remember: Rwanda Ten Years After Genocide," written by James Smith.

NSENGA Fidele

Fidele is 29 years old and represents and supervises the Social Information and Mobilization Center (SIMC) or (CIMS - in French), whose mission is to educate and advocate for the realization of human rights particularly with regards to land rights. in the sectors of Gatsata (in Kigali) and in Musanze (Ruhengeri). He has a Bachelor's degree A1 in African Languages and Literatures from the National University of Rwanda (NUR) in Butare. He is passionate about helping Rwanda and the Great Lakes Region to develop, speaking on behalf of the speechless, and helping to resolve conflicts.

Staff Biographies

Jesse Hawkes

*Program Director
Global Youth Connect*

Jesse is a social activist, professional actor and youth development worker currently living and working in Kigali, Rwanda. In addition to serving as GYC's Rwanda Program Director, Jesse volunteers as Program Director for RAPSIDA, an HIV/AIDS prevention program of Rwandans and Americans in Partnership, an organization Jesse co-founded in 2003 (www.rapsida.blogspot.com). His work at RAPSIDA has included developing and

managing a creative, engaging HIV prevention program for six Rwandan high schools utilizing a combination of innovative theatre methods, peer education, and outreach activities. He has also written episodes of Ishuti Solange for Population Services International (PSI-Rwanda), a popular radio drama series on HIV/AIDS and other public health concerns. In collaboration with the Rwandan Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport, Jesse performed at the 10th memorial service of the 1994 genocide at Amahoro Stadium, Kigali. As a founding member, assistant program director and chair of the Board of Directors for Centers for Social Responsibility, Jesse led outreach campaigns to schools for the Rwanda By Invitation program, chaired the Sister Schools program where he led secondary school students on a trip to Rwanda, and designed and delivered presentations on Rwandan history and culture to local high schools in Vermont. He also served as a visiting artist at the Community Arts Project in Cape Town, South Africa where he directed, wrote and facilitated a community development theatre project in collaboration with the South African government, township youth and South African artists. As an educational consultant for Parents, Teachers and Students for Social Responsibility, an organization implementing educational programs and projects designed to empower young people with the knowledge and attitudes needed to become proactive citizens for social justice, he led a group of high school youth from the US on a visit to Haiti. Jesse graduated cum laude from Harvard University in 1999 with a bachelor's degree in history, after which he acted in profession theatre in the US for 4 years prior to coming to Africa.

Joseph Ryarasa Nkurunziza

Chairperson

Never Again-Rwanda

Joseph completed his studies at the Medical School in 2005 at the National University of Rwanda and is currently working with the Millennium Villages project as a Program Implementer and planner in the health sector. He is involved with two organizations, Health Development Initiative as the vice chairperson and Never Again-Rwanda as the chairperson. He was the president of the Medical Students Association of Rwanda (Medsar) from 2004-2005 and through this position he initiated numerous community health based projects in the Huye District, southern province of Rwanda,

including an HIV/AIDS sensitization project in the Mugombwa Districts and various projects providing mothers with pre-natal consultations and family planning education. Between the years of 2001-2003, he was involved in the University Women Students Association and the Students Guild Council of the National University of Rwanda, where he was the Assistant Guild Minister of Gender and acted as a representative in the faculty council. He has also played a key organizational role in various national and international conferences, workshops, and public lectures, such as the Rwanda Forum in London in March 2004 and an Interuniversity Workshop on Gender Promotion at Kigali Institute of Science and Technology. He has attended numerous events as well including a sexual education conference in Birmingham, UK, Overseas Volunteers conference at Bristol University (UK) the International Federation of the Medical Students Associations' meetings in Turkey and Egypt, a sexual, reproductive health & development workshop in Zambia, African Medical training Congress in Ghana, and many other seminars on Rwandan politics, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and gender awareness, in 2005 Nov he organized a training for trainer for peer Educators in Reproductive Health. He is the chairperson of Never Again Rwanda. He has organized youth debates and forums among the Rwandan youth, facilitated trainings on youth human rights learning communities, organized a global youth genocide prevention forum in Kigali, initiated a youth project entitled mobilizing of youth to overcome social prejudices and manipulations in the former Kibuye province (Rwanda), initiated a project in the western province entitled engaging youth in the improving their social economical conditions, organized a workshop on unity and reconciliation as a pillar to development and his extra-curricular activities include reading, debating, and studying international politics and public relations. He plans to be engaged in peace building, conflict management and also treating people with tropical diseases.

Naomi Sully

Special Program Assistant

Global Youth Connect

A senior at Clark University, Naomi is majoring in international development and social change, with a minor in Holocaust and genocide Studies. She has

been traveling internationally since she was 9 years old which has shaped her interests in conflict resolution and human rights. These experiences include studying at the Center for Language and Intercultural Exchange in Seville, Spain, volunteering with Amigos de las Americas in Honduras, an internship in Russia with Jewish Women International, and spending time in Eastern Europe visiting concentration camps, ghettos, other Holocaust sites and existing Jewish communities on two occasions (2004 and 2007). She has been actively engaged in community service work within the US as well, having volunteered with Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts, the Interfaith Housing Coalition, Common Ground Collective in New Orleans, and CASA of Maryland, a non-profit workers' rights organization. At Clark University, she has been actively involved in a variety of student advocacy groups and organizational committees. In 2006, she served as the Coalition Coordination with the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group where she worked to pass a bill on energy efficiency standards. After taking part in GYC's Summer 2006 Human Rights Delegation to Rwanda, Naomi was Co-director and Treasurer of A Student Anti-Genocide Coalition (STAND) at Clark University and participated in the School for Americas Watch (SOAW). Last spring she wrote a capstone research paper on the comparison of post-conflict reconciliation in Rwanda and Armenia/Turkey, and this year, she is writing an honors thesis on the comparative development of Hutu-Tutsi identity in Burundi and Rwanda. Naomi hopes to find out how that development is affecting reconciliation efforts. Over the summer, Naomi held a competitive intern position at the Genocide Intervention Network. She is currently the Director of STAND at Clark and a coordinator of Teach Against Genocide, a project of the Genocide Intervention Network that aims to pass and implement funded mandates for genocide education in all states of the U.S.

Pascal (Pasi) Ruberwa

Local Project Coordinator

Global Youth Connect

Pasi is a high school graduate who is currently taking business Management courses at Kigali Institute of Management (KIM). He first became connected with Global Youth Connect through Jesse Hawkes, GYC's Rwanda Program Director. Jesse first met Pasi through his work with

RAPSIDA in a village community called Ndera outside of Kigali where Pasi lives with his mother and his brother Eddy. Pasi is involved with his reconciliation and anti-AIDS youth clubs in his home area and he has recently initiated a Never Again club at KIM.