

Global Youth Connect

Rwanda Program Report

Human Rights Delegation for Young Leaders

Organized in Collaboration with Never Again-Rwanda



GYC delegate Desirae Vasquez with young audience members at a reconciliation theatre presentation in Rwanda

Rwanda Human Rights Delegation December 29 – January 15, 2007

As 2006 was drawing to close, a group of 14 young leaders arrived in Rwanda to take part in a Global Youth Connect human rights delegation to Rwanda. For two and half weeks, the 14 delegation members engaged in a unique combination of activities, including:

- A “human rights learning community” workshop alongside 14 young Rwandans
- Site visits to local and international human rights organizations, government institutions, genocide memorials, and a *gacaca* court
- Volunteer fieldwork with local human rights organizations

Once again GYC worked in close collaboration and partnership with **Never Again-Rwanda**, a local organization working to educate young Rwandans about the genocide and ways to prevent future genocides. (www.neveragainrwanda.org)

With only a short time to accomplish an ambitious schedule, the trip was grueling for all of the participants and staff alike. A bout of stomach illnesses following the final day and party of the human rights workshop led most delegates to the brink of exhaustion as they journeyed to beautiful but haunted Kibuye for a site visit with Never Again-Rwanda. However, knowing that such physical and mental exhaustion could never compare with the trauma and hardship that existed in Rwanda in the past and that still exists in Rwanda today, the delegates remained determined and strong to get and to give as much as possible during the journey. The team even gave up their one day of rest and relaxation planned on the shores of Lake Kivu to travel hours into the mountains to see the genocide memorial at Bisesero traveling back to Kigali on the winding roads.

This GYC delegation yet again highlighted for all of us the grave human rights atrocities inflicted upon Rwanda, from both within and without, leading up to and climaxing with the 1994 genocide. It also introduced the

numerous challenges facing the people and nation of Rwanda today, as well as the many examples of courage, care, respect, and hope that have enabled Rwanda to overcome adversity in the past and which will sustain Rwanda into the future.



“The country is much more peaceful than I thought and the people here are very strong; many are very hopeful. I learned much about resilience from the people of this country.”



“I learned so much about the human ability to love in extreme and unexpected circumstances. I leave Rwanda with a piece of it in my heart and leave a part of me in Rwanda.”

Human Rights Learning Community Workshop

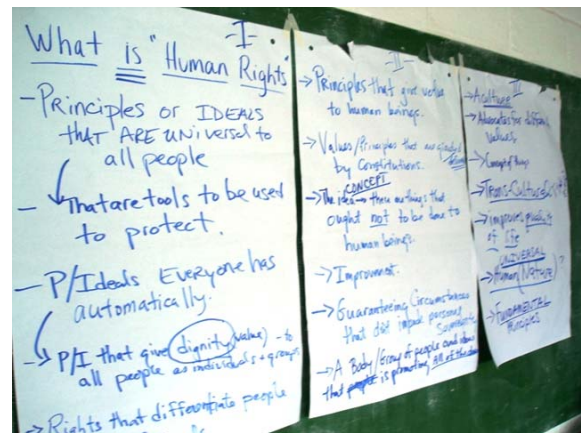
The workshop at the beginning of the delegation was an intense, interactive, and enlightening four-day dialogue among Rwandan and US youth (ages 18-30).

We held the workshop at the Centre Christus in Remera, a Jesuit community with beautiful gardens, lawns, and trees, not to mention a friendly staff, lovely cows, and curious monkeys. Unfortunately, it is also a place where numerous people were slaughtered at the hands of their priests in 1994.

Why did Rwandans apply to be part of the Human Rights Learning Community?

"I believe in the power of learning through participation. [T]he more people one meets the more informed one becomes. ... I believe it's vital to respect everybody's rights in whatever one intends to do, so knowing human rights helps me to know which way to take and when."

"In 5 years, I want be a universal person. I want to get knowledge of what is happening in the world on human rights issues and this will help me use media as powerful weapon to protect human rights."



What is/are "human rights"?

To start the workshop, we held an initial dialogue about "What is/are human rights?", giving us a better understanding of the wide range of ideas and meanings associated with these two words, which we hear everyday on the radio or TV but which may not mean the exact same thing to each and every one of us.

Some responses on this topic from the group included:

- Principles or ideals that are universal to all people that are tools used to protect
- Principles or ideals that everyone has automatically
- Principles or ideals that give dignity/value to all people as individuals and groups
- Rights that differentiate people from animals
- Values and principles that are granted or defined by constitutions
- The idea or concept that there are things that there are things that ought not to be to done to human beings
- Guaranteeing circumstances that don't impede personal sovereignty

Then, taking this discussion further, we began to identify specific human rights by asking

ourselves “What are universal/fundamental human rights?”

Some responses from the group included the rights to:

- Freedom of thought and freedom of expression
- Live and breathe
- Own/accept one’s culture
- Self-determination within a group – or culture – even if it means going against that culture
- Clean water
- Employment (or equal opportunity to employment)
- Be healthy
- Right to love and be loved
- Play
- Protest
- Belong o an ethnic group
- Vote

Interestingly enough, we noted that the word “genocide” did not appear anywhere in our definitions of human rights.

Then, in small groups, we analyzed the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, comparing them to current, related issues in the USA and Rwanda.

UDHR -- Article 20
Right to freedom of peaceful assembly

United States	Rwanda
People can assemble without permission, can protest in the streets as long as there is no violence	Must get permission from the police, ministry
Patriot Act – new set of laws passed by the US government which reduces freedom of expression through invasion of privacy and questionings, arrests	Each association must get status from the state → set of rules
	Censorship
	In 1997, university student demonstrators beaten, suppressed, punished severely – others had to flee.

UDHR -- Article 8
Right to effective remedy by competent tribunal

United States	Rwanda
Disparities in public vs. private representation	Lack of trained professionals
	Case overload
	Fear of testimony
	Lack of surviving witnesses

Afterwards, we asked ourselves:

- “Is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) an important document? Is the UDHR a flawless document?”
- “Should the UDHR and “human rights” in general be used as a tool to organize youth to take action? If so, then how should it be used?”

Human Rights Violations in Rwanda

Participants wrote their ideas about the human rights violations and achievements in Rwanda, both before, during and after the 1994 genocide. Some of the Rwandan participants noted that the discussion about Rwanda from 1959 - 1994 was eye-opening.

“This discussion is important because so many youth in Rwanda today have no idea what happened before the genocide. There is no history being taught in Rwandan schools about this.”

--Rwandan workshop participant

When we started debating human rights in Rwanda today, we were all sobered by the fact that so many comments and ideas ended up in the middle area, where we could not decide if the issue represented a violation or an achievement. As one example, the observation that abortion is illegal in Rwanda was interpreted by some as a human rights

violation, and by others as a human rights achievement.

Rwandan Man: *I don't think that it should be legal. We must respect God's wishes.*

International Woman: *Is it good to bring children into the world if we know that their human rights will be violated upon arrival?*

International Man: *Whose human rights do you respect more, the woman or the child?*

International Man: *I feel like I have very little say in this, as a male, and I would love to hear what more Rwandan women think about this issue.*

Rwandan Woman: *I think it can be legal in some cases and illegal in others.*

Rwandan Woman: *I disagree. I think that it should be illegal. Life is precious.*

International Woman: *What is the difference between being raped during the genocide and losing a limb in the genocide? Nobody argues against helping people who have lost their limbs in Rwanda today. Abortion is a service that can help women who have been raped.*

Rwandan Man: *Women should have the right to abortion.*

Dramatic Exploration of Human Rights and their Violations

Knowing that theatrical expression can inform how both actors and audiences view and react to particular issues and situations, we created short sketches about human rights violations in Rwanda before 1994. We created the sketches using different theatre methods: Forum Theatre, Image Theatre, and Musical Theatre.

The Forum Theatre groups were asked to end their sketches poorly (with the violation, *not* a solution to the violation). Then, after the

sketch, a discussion ensued and the sketch was repeated so that the audience could choose to intervene to change the destiny of the scene.

In the pictures that follow, the original actress (Tiffany) was replaced by an audience member (Jesse), in a scene about a local authority figure who was trying to convince neighbors to burn the homes of their Tutsi friends. Jesse's change was that he refused to take the gasoline from the local authority figure (played by Melissa).



In the play he was not punished, but what would have happened in real life? After the play ended for the second time, we wondered, "Why didn't anyone replace the authority figure first?"

We also raised the question, "Is it possible to have a positive dictatorship? Or are all dictatorships negative?"



Another Forum Theatre sketch portrayed the Rwandan cabinet discussing what to do when the RPF invades Rwanda. The Prime Minister (shown with her head bowed above) is the only one who is not in favor of exterminating Tutsis in the country.

Several audience members replaced the ministers to try to effect changes, but no one replaced the Prime Minister to see what she could do. As one participant expressed:

“But how could we replace the Prime Minister? What other arguments could she raise at this point, with so many people against her? What were her options?”

In the Musical Theatre sketch, one character was asked to sing his/her emotions at some point in the play, preferably after the violation had occurred, so as to see how the music affects the emotions of the audience while they engage with the material.

Rwanda participant Totto played a young boy who was asked *not* to sing with the others a song about unity at school because he was Tutsi. Then, abandoned, he sang a sorrowful song of his own, causing more than one delegate in the audience to cry, before the rest of the characters in the scene recognized him and his sorrow and listened to him and welcomed him into the group.

The sketch was a good reminder that amidst the discrimination and brain-washing that

occurred before the genocide, there were glimpses of hope.

As one of the listeners reflected:

“It was important to see that he sang his song and did not hold in his pain. He shared it with someone and through that sharing he was able to get support.”



Totto and others perform Musical Theater

The last issue highlighted the irony that in 1994, the cries for help from within Rwanda were not heeded by those outside.

One Image Theatre group was asked to produce images (no words) of, first, their human rights violation, and second, the absence of the violation (i.e. the “ideal situation”). Their presentation of these images was followed by a discussion about the images and how the change could possibly occur from A to B; and what could prevent the solution from occurring. One powerful image was the violation of measuring the noses of people to “prove” their ethnicity and “superiority.”

Finally, one group was asked to do a dramatic representation of Article 2 of the 1951 United Nations Genocide Convention. For each bullet point in the definition, they created a separate image. After, the audience discussed which images had the greatest effect on them.



***“Forcibly transferring children of the
“group to another group.*”**

Conversations about Human Rights during the Genocide

Given that respectful, trustful dialogue is deeply related to how we can learn about human rights violations and achievements, each Rwandan delegate teamed with one international delegate after lunch to have a private conversation as a formal part of the workshop. Suggested topics/questions included: “Where were you in April 1994?”

These conversations helped provide a more personal perspective. As one GYC delegate noted:

“Talking to Rwandan delegates and other people we met here about their experiences changed the way I thought about the genocide and made it much more personal.”

Moving from Education to Advocacy and Action!

In small groups, the participants created questions about unresolved issues related to human rights in Rwanda and presented them to a panel of representatives from a variety of Rwandan human rights NGOs, where the US delegates would be volunteering later in the delegation, including representatives from: Fact-Rwanda, AJPRODHO, Uyisenga N’Manzi, and Fight Illiteracy Youth Organization.

The delegates spent the final morning together during the workshop doing small group planning to spark future action on some of the issues addressed during the workshop. After brainstorming, the small groups returned to the large group to share with each

other their plans, get comments from one another, discuss ways of moving forward, including signing up for small group email lists to stay informed of what each group does in the future.

At the time of writing this program report, only three months after the January delegation, several of the small groups had already begun launching their action plans: Seek CARE had joined forces with the Medical Students’ Association of the National University of Butare and had drafted a proposal and several members of the Sexual Education Group had begun sourcing materials and support in the US and planning a return to Rwanda to work with Uyisenga n’ Manzi. In addition, numerous January delegates planned Genocide awareness weeks and presentations for their schools and communities in the USA in early April, the 13th anniversary of the start of the Rwandan Genocide.



Sample Small Group Action Plans

Seek CARE: Counseling, Awareness, Recovery, Empathy

"We are concerned about the stigma against psychological care in Rwanda and the implication this stigma has in regard to the reconciliation process. We want to create safe spaces for healing, especially during the months of April to June when many Rwandans experience the most trauma."

Human Rights Chat: Cross-Cultural Dialoguing about Human Rights

"We want to create more open dialogue on the topic of abortion and other issues important to human rights, because the dialogue itself that we had about that topic was so useful and inspirational to all of us, even if we did not come to a conclusion/agreement. We think it would be good to at least continue it and involve others as well. Use Never Again-Rwanda to access youth clubs to incorporate them into the debate. Select kids from the pro- and anti-abortion camps to moderate a safe place to share ideas about abortion. Use the internet."

Counteracting Illiteracy

Counteracting illiteracy had been the main focus of the action planning during the May 2006 human rights workshop co-organized by GYC and Never Again-Rwanda. Among other actions, the May delegation created a short documentary on the issue of illiteracy in Rwanda, to raise awareness and funds to support the work of the Rwandan organization Fight Illiteracy Youth Organization. The hope in January was that we could continue the discussion about illiteracy in one of the small groups and link with the efforts of the previous delegation

Other Action Plans Created

- Formal Sexual Education
- Female Sport and Games League
- Sports for Peace
- Clothes Donations to Assist Orphans of the Genocide

Gacaca Court Visit

As with the previous delegations, GYC was able to observe a *gacaca* court proceeding on Saturday, January 14, 2007 joining Never Again-Rwanda for a visit to the local *gacaca* in the sector of Nyamirambo, on the outskirts of Kigali. As before, no pictures were allowed and the GYC group was acknowledged by the judges prior to the opening of the trial which took place under an orange tent in a field near the sector headquarters, starting late due to lack of a community quorum.

In the center, for four hours, with no counsel, stood a 27 year old man accused of killing, pillaging, and manning roadblocks during the 1994 genocide, when he was 14 years old. Now a tall man in a nice white shirt and dark pants, the accused stood in an awkward, leaning position, with his arms crossed and one shoulder cocked high. Before him sat a panel of eight judges, each with the colors of the Rwandan flag pinned to his or her attire.

The trial opened with the head judge asking the accused to determine which level of crime he was being accused of:

Judge: *There are 3 levels : (1) those who led and planned and who raped women, (2) Those who participated in the attacks that killed people, and (3) those who robbed and destroyed houses. Which level are you going to accept?*

Accused: *None.*

Judge: *If you agree to explain yourself here, what level do you accept?*

Accused: *I don't agree with any level. I didn't do any of those things.*

Judge: *Well, we cannot at this court judge level 3, destroying housings and robberies only, so we must put you down as level 2. If you are innocent it will be clear. This will be your chance to explain yourself.*

It seemed that, especially without a lawyer, the young man was going to flounder. He maintained that he had been very ill during the genocide and that he had been in his house the whole time and had seen and heard nothing about the genocide. The judges were highly skeptical of this remark, especially since it smacked of denying the genocide itself. They took a moment to make it known to the accused and to the court that it was highly unlikely that he could have been so sick that he would not have known anything about the terror that was raging around his house in his area. The accused remained silent.

The whole process soon became disjointed and confused. Some witnesses had been ushered away to ensure that their statements would be delivered without knowledge of the statements of the accused, but others were then taken spontaneously from the crowd when they raised their hands. Some witnesses were never allowed to speak, as the head judge waved them away with the flick of his wrist as soon as they opened their mouths. That same judge had opened the trial with the statement: *“Everyone who wants to talk should have the opportunity to talk.”*

The first witnesses to testify were the families of the people whom the accused had allegedly killed. Ironically, they testified that it was not the accused but his older brother who had been marauding, pillaging, manning road blocks, and killing their family members. At that point, the question on some of our minds was, “Who had actually accused this young man?”

Eventually, other witnesses arose from the audience insisting that indeed the accused had done the killings himself.

A series of cross examinations then seemed to put a crack into the story of the accused. One witness stated, *“You saw me on the street and boasted to me that you had just killed my husband?”* and the accused stated *“Yes, I saw you on the street but I remember I greeted you only, nothing more.”*

Again, the judges became upset, not only because the man was perjuring himself, but specifically because he was lying about his knowledge of the genocide again. In fact, on more than one occasion, the judges seemed to use the *gacaca* as a means of reinforcing the correct way to behave in Rwandan society today: to respect and acknowledge fully what had taken place in the genocide. They took every opportunity to publicly scold him (and anyone else who would dare speak like him) for not recognizing fully and passionately the horrors that had taken place during the genocide, or for not fully respecting survivors in their speeches. Another time the judge wanted to know if one of the witnesses, who had assisted a Tutsi with food and shelter during the genocide, had gone back to search for the man after the genocide. All of these were irrelevant to the basic question of the trial, but they were certainly a part of the *gacaca* court’s unstated mandate, to promulgate the proper way of behaving in Rwanda today.

The intent of their scolding was not entirely apparent until the end, however, when the verdict was delivered. After a short break during which the accused actually sat down in his chair for the first time in three and a half hours, the judges returned from their deliberation area to announce that there was not enough evidence against the accused to condemn him. They said that an appeal could be filed by anyone within 15 days. We were relieved because we agreed that the whole process had been too discombobulated and imprecise to pin anything on anyone, even a young man who appeared to be lying to the court.

Other Site Visits and Activities

Radio La Benevolencija

Radio La Benevolencija is devoted to helping people worldwide who have suffered from ethnic violence. Their media broadcasts and grassroots activities raise awareness about the dangers of political propaganda, group pressure and the patterns that lead to group violence. Their program in Rwanda aims to

contribute to reconciliation and the prevention of future ethnic violence through a serial radio drama that has proven to be very popular. The program has a Great Lakes regional focus that extends to Burundi and the Eastern Congo, with the Rwanda program as its pilot and hub. We were lucky to visit with Radio La Benevolencija on a day when they were beginning a training conference for their teams from all over the Great Lakes region. And we were pleasantly surprised that some of the key presenters at this training, Professors Laura Pearlman and Ervin Staub, had been the organizers of the original conference on genocide prevention that had given birth to Global Youth Connect!

Fight Illiteracy Youth Organization (FIYO)

Fight Illiteracy Youth Organization is the focus of an ongoing campaign by GYC and our program alumni to raise awareness and support for the fight against illiteracy in Rwanda. During this delegation, FIYO brought the GYC group out into the countryside to witness one of FIYO's projects that creates fuel efficient stoves in the community of Ntarama. This activity serves two functions. First, it provides the literacy training program with a practical project that can be addressed during the literacy training. Second, these stoves save so much wood that they enable the young children who would normally be engaged daily in foraging for firewood to attend primary school in the community.



Rwandan Association for Family Well-Being (ARBEF)

The Rwandan Association for Family Well-Being (ARBEF) has programs all over Rwanda that assist families with counseling, testing, and clinical services related to family planning and family well-being. The GYC delegation visited the Kigali clinic and main office where the ARBEF staff briefed the group about their work, which includes research on abortion in Rwanda, and advocating for changing the laws to decrease or eliminate penalties for abortion. We also took a tour of the clinic, which was packed with people. Incidentally, the Executive Director of ARBEF, Dr. Laurien Nyabyenda, was also hosted some of the GYC delegates during their homestay experience.



Visiting ARBEF's clinic

Never Again – Rwanda (NA-R) Youth Clubs in Kibuye

Never Again-Rwanda, GYC's local partner organization in Rwanda, facilitates the exchange of ideas between young people in NA-R's clubs to advance a vision of reconciliation between people of different ethnic backgrounds in Rwanda. NA-R's clubs engage youth from a variety of ethnic backgrounds primarily through: 1) income generating activities that relieve the economic pressures that can lead to competition and violence; 2) sporting events/competitions emphasizing the importance of teamwork; and 3) theatrical presentations and debates emphasizing the need for awareness and

dialogue among youth on important topics such as HIV/AIDS and gender relations.

The delegation members traveled to Kibuye, a town where over 90% of the Tutsi population had been exterminated in 1994, to spend an afternoon with one of NA-R's Kibuye clubs. The club presented a play and poem on HIV prevention and engaged in dialogue with the GYC youth.

Uyisenga N'Manzi

New Year Celebration at the Peace Village

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. The peace village is where numerous child headed households are getting a fresh start. Having spent time with the youth at Uyisenga N'Manzi's peace village on both previous delegations, it was a joy for GYC to return to the village on New Year's Eve to share a Fanta soda, play some games, sing some songs, as well as to have a tour of the village with the young residents.



GYC and Uyisenga youth in front of one of the Peace Village homes

Senator Aloisea Inyumba

Despite having lost a family member on that very day, Senator Aloisea Inyumba graciously insisted that she meet with the GYC youth as planned for a brief conversation at the Senate Offices. Senator

Inyumba, formerly the head of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission as well as Governor of the Kigali-Ngali Province, discussed a variety of topics and clearly inspired the GYC youth who were present with her passionate love and understanding of the Rwandan people and of the most important issues facing the nation, including reconciliation, economics, class divisions, and gender equality.

Home Stays with Rwandan Families

The GYC delegates had a chance to spend 4 nights with Rwandan host families. Some stayed with middle class families sharing a comfy bed at night. Others stayed in fancier homes where they were treated to their own beds and maybe even got Rice Krispees for breakfast (\$9 per box because Rwanda is a landlocked country!). One delegate traveled into the countryside near Kigali where he relished the opportunity to see how Rwandans live in a country home and community.



GYC delegates with their Rwandan 'sisters' at Hajji's Family, Kimironko

As one GYC delegate expressed: "The best thing about the home stays was talking about what Rwandans outside the workshop thought about the same issues!"

And the Rwandan families also found great value in the exchange: "They were of

different behaviors and cultures but we lived with them without any problem. I was motivated by their mission here in Rwanda and they are only young students!””

Genocide Memorials

GYC delegates had the opportunity to bear witness and pay their respects at several genocide memorials, including the Kigali memorial at Gisozi, the Ntarama church in the village where FIYO works, the Catholic church at Kibuye, the site where Belgian peacekeepers had been killed by *interahamwe* militias, and the Bisesero monument.



Bisesero Monument

Bisesero, a small town in what used to be the Kibuye prefecture, sits atop some of the tallest hills in the region and is home to an important memorial. In 1994, the Tutsi population of Bisesero staged a three month resistance against the Hutu-led genocide. The 14,000 Tutsi who stayed in the church ward off the Hutu by catapulting large rocks at their attackers. As the French moved into the region and attempted to establish a safe-zone, the Bisesero Tutsi let their guard down and subsequently ambushed by Hutu militias. Only several hundred individuals survived. Members of the GYC delegation were able to view the church, site of the massacre, as well as a new addition which will serve as a small museum in the future. The tour was guided by one of the few survivors of the Bisesero massacre, who provided a compelling description of his experience.

--John Connelly

“The genocide memorials really helped me to understand the magnitude of the genocide.”

“There is nothing you can read in books that compares.”



Fieldwork Projects

During the last four days of our time in Rwanda, GYC delegation members volunteered for local non-governmental human rights organizations. We collaborated with five wonderful organizations: *Never Again-Rwanda*, *AJPRODHO*, *FACT*, *FIYO* and *Uyisenga N’Manzi*.

As volunteers, participants had the opportunity to work on projects such as writing grant proposals and editing annual reports, creating educational materials/models and co-leading workshops based on those models, taking/recording testimonies from genocide survivors and orphans, as well as spending time getting to know more about the work of each organization and the strategies they are pursuing to achieve the full respect for human rights in Rwanda. It was great to see that even though the fieldwork period during the January delegation was quite short, we were still able to contribute a lot to the ongoing efforts of local Rwandan groups.

“I was deeply impressed by the numerous grassroots programs and spirit of many Rwandans of wanting to heal their country.”

And the impact of the GYC delegation members work and efforts continues to be felt long after they return home to the U.S. For example:

The report written by previous delegation participants John Connelly and Haley Koch in the summer of 2006 was instrumental in gaining AJPRODHO a foothold on funding to sensitize citizens in Rwanda about the issues facing Rwandan refugees who are now being repatriated from Tanzania.

Educational materials created by Karina Garcia, Kuong Ly, and Michael Zanchelli with Never Again-Rwanda in January 2007 are currently being used to inspire university students at the National University of Rwanda to create awareness raising movement concerning the genocide in Darfur, Sudan.

More Participant Reflections

“I feel like I have a better understanding of human rights, genocide, and cross-cultural understanding.”

“The trip helped me refocus my goals for working in human rights.”

“Understanding that there is so much more out there than America and not just reading about Rwanda but experiencing and feeling it.”

“I learned I can step outside the comfort zone and that it will usually pay off as I will learn more and gain more out of the experience.”

“Sometimes listening is probably the best thing you can do.”

GYC Participant Biographies

Susanna Carlson

Zannie is majoring in sociology at Kenyon College with a concentration in African and African-American studies. Her primary academic interest is class and race relations, which she has explored extensively both through her educational and practical experiences. She is especially interested in the intersection of racial ideology and the sociology of genocide, particularly in the case of Rwanda. Zannie has held numerous leadership positions on campus and in the spring of this year was an extern for ERASE Racism, an organization that seeks to alleviate the structural racism inherent in American society. During this summer she spent one month volunteering with the New Orleans relief effort, followed by a month as an intern for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), an organization that works to help integrate immigrants into our communities, aid in the hunger crisis in Africa, and has acted as a mediator in resolving the conflict in the Sudan. Zannie hopes to continue participating in programs that work for a more equitable distribution of resources and to minimize economic disparity which manifests itself in terms of access to healthcare, education, and overall quality of life.

Karina Garcia

Karina just finished her third year at the University of California, Los Angeles pursuing a major in International Development Studies with a minor in Chicano/a studies. At UCLA she serves as an executive member of the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance and the Reproductive Rights Coalition and is a founding member of the UCLA Darfur Action Committee. She also currently serves as the Legislative Director of the UC Sudan Divestment Taskforce where she is currently with fellow members to pass a CA state divestment bill. Karina wants to pursue a graduate degree in an area dealing with international relations, development and/or conflict.

Maya Hautefeuille

Having lived in Japan, Australia, France and in the USA, Maya is globally minded, culturally sensitive and has invaluable cross-cultural communication skills. She can communicate fluently in English and French and has experience speaking Japanese, Spanish and Swahili. The ethnic mixture in her life experiences has inspired her to explore how different cultures and groups can function together successfully. In 2006 she went to Kenya to volunteer for two months with several different organizations. She served as volunteer with the Kenya Voluntary Development Association, worked on social development and education projects with Mighty Children of Africa in Nairobi and worked with children at the Ananda Marga Children's Home in Mombasa. Maya wants to continue to be a hands-on, in-the-field activist working with children and youth, raising their consciousness of social and economic freedom and building an unshakable faith in the direction of African unity.

Tiffany Isaacs

Tiffany is currently a research associate for the Council on Hemispheric Affairs in Washington DC where she is researching and writing articles about humanitarian concerns, the United Nations and women's rights in Latin America. She has taken several classes in international affairs in addition to receiving her bachelor's in philosophy from Brown University in May 2005. She has worked for the Watson Institute for International Studies where she helped conceptualize and coordinate a study guide for the Sundance Film Festival Documentary "Why We Fight", a film addressing the question of why Americans go to war. Tiffany has also been active in the Save Darfur organization where she recruited seventy volunteers who now run their own regional campaigns. She is currently in the process of applying to graduate schools to study international relations and has a particular interest in studying the role of identity in human conflicts.

Elizabeth Lim

Elizabeth is currently pursuing her Bachelor's degree in political science from UC Berkeley with a minor in French literature. In 2006, she was a research assistant in the political science and sociology departments, pursuing projects related to immigration and citizenship. In 2005-2006, she worked for the University Students' Cooperative Association serving as Vice President of Internal Affairs & Operations, regularly promoting and evaluating policies on affordable student housing in the Berkeley area. After college, she hopes to enter a post-graduate dual-degree program to continue studying international law and economic development. Elizabeth has remained active in advocating for human rights since childhood upon listening to her grandparents' experiences during the Japanese invasion of China during World War II and has been following the events and aftermath of the Rwandan genocide since her early teens.

Kuong Ly

Kuong is a junior at Boston College double majoring in philosophy and studio art, with a minor in faith, peace and justice. He is deeply interested in human rights issues, particularly the role of international law and organizations like the United Nations in defending human rights, and plans to pursue a Master's Degree in human rights. Kuong is the multi-ethnic son of survivors of the Cambodian genocide. He was born in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and immigrated to the United States as a refugee in 1990 at the age of six. Given his family history, he is particularly interested in studying issues pertaining to refugees and forced migration, as well as global mental health and what that means for survivors of genocide. Kuong has worked as a research assistant for the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma, and will be spending his junior spring semester abroad in China immediately following the Rwandan delegation. He is a 2005 Patrick Stewart Human Rights Scholar and current Institute for International Public Policy Fellow.

Melissa Martelly

Melissa is recent a graduate from Gwynedd Mercy College where she received the Chi Eta Phi nursing scholarship. Currently she is working as a Registered Nurse at the Thomas Jefferson University Hospital based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In her experiences as a nurse she often cares for underserved populations and would like to pursue a graduate degree in global or public health to further serve those in need. She completed her rotations at a public health clinic, with the public health department and St. John's Hospice shelter for homeless men. She also completed an extensive research paper on the life stressors of Zimbabwean immigrants residing in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Melissa, who is fluent in Creole, hopes to work in international health and provide not only humanitarian aid, but also work to enforce and create health policy measures that will ensure access to clean water, immunizations and the education of women and children.

Carla Mike

Carla is a sophomore at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, where she is a social work major with minors in international affairs and international economics. She hopes to work to promote social justice on the international level. Recently she traveled to Nashville to attend the COOL Idealist Conference which expanded upon her knowledge of the need for work on critical global issues. Carla currently volunteers at an after school program for Baltimore City elementary school students as a mentor and tutor. She is working on starting a UNICEF chapter at her university where she will be the Vice President and hopes to connect this group with the Social Work Student Association to collaborate on awareness campaigns for critical social justice issues. She intends to continue on to graduate school to obtain her Masters in Social Work coupled with a degree that has an international welfare component.

Jessica Shoemaker

Jessica is currently a student at Vanderbilt University studying earth and environmental

sciences. After completing her studies at Vanderbilt University she hopes to pursue a master's degree in environmental policy. In particular, Jessica is interested in the environments in post-conflict nations and how they are at great risk as stability is restored and industry returns. After graduate school she hopes to be working to develop a program working with mining companies in the Great Lakes region of Africa to bring more money to local communities to pay for healthcare, education and other essential programs, while preserving the integrity of the environment.

Matthew Reichel

Matt is a sophomore at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, studying international Relations (political economic development track) and East Asian studies (Chinese). Matt has been engaging significantly with human rights, cross-cultural understanding and development issues for the last five years, while traveling extensively through mostly Asia and Latin America. Matt participated with Global Routes, a non-profit student rural community service organization in both Nepal and Thailand, and he was a member of WTBD, a cross-cultural and wilderness ISP program in both northeast India and Mongolia. Matt is passionate about languages as well. He is fluent in Mandarin Chinese and Spanish, proficient in Portuguese, French, Hindi-Urdu, Arabic, and has a basic knowledge of Mongolian, Thai, Vietnamese, Lao, and Nepali. We hope there is still some room left for Kinyarwanda!

Laura Emiko Soltis

Laura, a multilingual, biracial activist and accomplished violinist is currently a PhD candidate at the Institute of Human Rights at Emory University. Through school scholarships and violin performance opportunities she has traveled to nearly thirty countries and has developed a deep interest in the recovery of post-conflict societies. She recently worked at the Carter Center as part of the Human Rights Initiative Internship where she worked in coordination with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and organized the 2006

Human Rights Defenders Conference. She has also worked on Capitol Hill, with Amnesty International, took part in a Peace Symposium for Global Volunteers.

Rachael Tober

Rachael is an international studies major at Niagara University who is passionate about conflict resolution and public health, specifically as related to Africa and HIV/AIDS. She has extensive experience working with children from diverse cultures and backgrounds through serving as a counselor for an elementary after-school program, inner-city soccer program, and for an international residential camp. She also has experience working with HIV/AIDS community services in New York State and has served as a caretaker in a hospice in Buffalo. Rachael has participated as a moderator for various conferences on global issues, including a Model UN conference and Crossing Borders conference. She also has worked with members of the United Nations on peacekeeping operations. She is the current president of her university's chapter of Phi Beta Delta which is the honor society for international studies students. After graduation, she plans to pursue a master's degree in public health and is committed to working and living in Africa.

Desirae Vasquez

Born and raised in the Washington, D.C. area, Desirae is a 21 year old senior at Johns Hopkins University, earning dual-degrees in psychology and public health-social sciences. Desirae hopes to work one day in a metropolitan area of need, D.C. or Baltimore, to promote the improvement of mental health care and parenting resources of underprivileged minority mothers; and in the meanwhile, she hopes to remain active in advocacy organizations on and off campus right up through doctoral level studies. Desirae is a mental health research intern in the Population, Family, and Reproductive Health at the Bloomberg School of Public Health, where she has served as a research assistant in the Keeping Families Strong therapy program for depressed mothers and their children in downtown Baltimore and

participated in the citywide Community Mediation Program that helps to settle neighborhood disputes. Desirae has worked as a resident advisor for the past two years at JHU and, for the past three years, has been the leader of a diversity workshop facilitation team on the JHU campus "Students Educating and Empowering for Diversity" (SEED). Desirae's awards include the Benjamin & Fortuna Iseman Klotz Memorial Scholarship and the Isadore and Bertha Gudeslky Family Foundation Scholarship. She is also a member of several Honorary Societies such as the Golden Key International Honour Society, Psi Chi – National Psychology Honors Society, and the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. She is also an active member of Alpha Phi Omega, a co-ed service fraternity. Desirae is of Latina as well as Eastern European heritage.

Michael Zanchelli

Michael is currently a junior at James Madison University where he is majoring in political science and justice studies with a concentration in global policy and justice. He currently serves as the vice president of his campus' chapter of Amnesty International. Michael has fundraising experience with the American Cancer Society where he planned and implemented fundraising strategies for Relay for Life and Up Til' Dawn where he helped raise funds for patients of St. Jude's Hospital. He also has extensive experience with the Hanover County Parks and Recreation Department where he worked as a recreation aide and assisted with the planning of their youth summer program by implementing activities and programs with the youth participants. Michael serves as mediator in both a personal and work capacity in which he constantly seeks all sides to an issue through empathy and compassion. Michael hopes to attend law school where he can study human rights law and alternative dispute resolution.

Rwandan Participant Biographies

Godlives Karangwa

Godlives is a Microfinance Coordinator for *VI Life Programme*—whose mission is to improve and empower the lives of farmers in Rwanda. While there, she mobilizes community savings activities. She believes in the power of learning through participation and that the more people one meets the more one becomes informed for the future betterment of all. She is especially inspired to work for young women and their rights and be a positive role model for them, and as such, intends to pursue a Masters in Community Development. This will allow her to continue to improve the lives of local people's and especially young women.

Benita Hakiba

Benita Hakiba was born in the Congo, grew up in Rwanda and is now in an undergraduate program in Community Development at Daystar University-Kenya. She is studying Community Development because she believes she can help her country—Rwanda—through this work. At her university, she is part of an organization called "United to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals" which focuses on how each community can work to achieve the MDG's. She dreams of working for an important NGO and believes this is the way to do it. Miss Hakiba intends to set a good example for other women as a hard, determined worker who has the respect of her peers and colleagues. Miss Hakiba believes in the power of the term "Never Again" and sees this workshop as an opportunity to learn from others with similar and different backgrounds and moral convictions. As she notes, "Change begins with each one of us!"

Christine Mukankundiye

Christine currently attends the National University of Rwanda, studying Social Work. She is an active member of the University Women Students Association (UWASA) and the Rwanda United Nations Association (RUNA). Amongst other things, in 2005 she served as a vice commissioner in charge of Gender and Family Promotion at the National

University of Rwanda. As a young woman, she feels it is important to participate in such clubs and workshops, like this one, in order to learn from each other and advance the field of human rights. Her goals are many, but the foremost is being a voice for the voiceless and an advocate for vulnerable children and women.

Claudia Nishimwe

While on holiday, Claudia works for *Mbirandumva Initiative*—which means "Speak I am listening." This organization helps women and girl survivors of the genocide financially and emotionally. Miss Nishimwe is in charge of giving the young women their monthly allowances. She is concurrently a student at Daystar University in Kenya, where she is majoring in Business Administration and Management, and will graduate in July. Having survived the genocide, Miss Nishimwe wants to give back to her country, by learning more about human rights and what she can do, as well as what organizations do to promote human rights. Eventually, she would like to do a Masters in International Relations, so she can improve lives in her country, as she believes "we are all one people."

Jean Pierre Niyitanga

Jean Pierre is currently a student at the National University of Rwanda, where he studies Journalism and Communications. He is a part of the Never Again International Media Group—for this he creates awareness on genocide using the media and he also reports on the unity and reconciliation process in Rwanda. He is the Chief Editor of *Ibanga News for Peace* newspaper—this is a UNESCO, UPEACE and National University led initiative that aims at promoting positive local initiatives. He also serves as a reporter, designer and photographer for the university newspaper *The New Butarean*. Mr. Niyitanga would eventually like to pursue a Masters in Human Rights and combine that with his media interests to promote human rights through the use of media.

Moses Kalisa

Moses is a social worker that is just completing his studies at the National University of Rwanda. Apart from being a student, he also participated in research for the *Adventist Development Relief Agency* (ADRA), which included doing field research. Mr. Kalisa has also helped a foreign, doctoral student do work on pre- and post-genocide immigration in Rwanda do research—this is an area Mr. Kalisa would also like to know more about. He wants to use his degree as a social worker to identify people's social, psychological and emotional needs, in this way he believes peace and human rights can be respected to the max. He enjoys meeting people from different places and new cultures and working with the needy.

Joy Petite Ruhigisha

Joy is a Resettlement Assistant for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kibuye. The UNHCR attempts to ensure the protection of refugees throughout the world. She is a trained lawyer, having received her degree from the National University of Rwanda. Considering her job is with refugees, Miss Ruhigisha would like to use this human rights workshop to learn better how to promote and enhance effective leadership and responsible action for the realization of human rights. She hopes to share what she has learnt from her job and ways to put human rights into practice. Eventually, she would like to influence others on how to resolve conflict and bring more opportunities to many of the world's poorest and marginalized people.

Christine Mbabazi

Christine is a student at the National University of Rwanda focusing on Management and Applied Statistics. She is a member of the University Women Students Association (UWASA), where she serves as a mentor for local secondary school girls. She uses this platform to promote girls' education and gender awareness. She is curious about how people from outside of Rwanda view the genocide that happened, but also their ideas on discrimination in general. She would like

to encourage women to speak out and be involved in the development of Rwanda.

Emmanuel Musoni Rwliliza

Emmanuel is currently a medical student at the National University of Rwanda. He serves as the president of the Medical Student Mental Health Association within the Medical Student Association (MEDSAR). Their mission is to promote the mental well being of the Rwandan population. Mr. Rwliliza's motto is "live in a better world or make the world a better place to live in." He believes the human rights workshop will enhance the possibility of making the world a better place to live in. He would eventually like to travel widely to promote unity and reconciliation, especially as it relates to health and medical needs.

Odette Umutesi

Odette has received a degree in Accounting from Umutara Polytechnic. She works for an organization called *Behaviour Change Communication Program of Byumba Diocese*. There, she is a student peer educator, educating the people on HIV/AIDS and how to prevent and fight it. Through this workshop, she hopes to attain an understanding of genocide and why it happens and how we can work to prevent it. Miss Umutesi hopes to combine this with her work as an accountant, so that she can manage the country's resources honestly and accurately in order to transform Rwanda economically. She wants to fight for human dignity and the prevention of dehumanization.

Iragira Proust

Iragira is the Shift Coordinator for the *Rwandan Youth Alliance Club* (RYA). RYA encourages the coalition of young people throughout the Great Lakes Region of Africa, through the larger Great Lakes Region Youth Association. Mr. Proust works to ensure the smooth running and implementation of RYA activities. Originally from Goma in the Congo, he is currently studying engineering at the National University of Rwanda. He has participated in various human rights workshops and conferences throughout Africa including the Institute for International

Mediation and Conflict Resolution Symposium in Cape Town, South Africa and an International Youth Conference in Nairobi, Kenya. Mr. Proust believes, "the more you know, the more your ignorance unfolds," and hopes the workshop will unfold much.

Theogene Niwenshuti

Theogene is currently a communications student at the National University of Rwanda. He is the president and founder of *RUGARI NUR Family*, whose mission is to promote peace, young talent, and positive human values through a variety of activities, exchanges and communications at a local and international level. Mr. Niwenshuti is a dancer and choreographer, as well, having traveled to Europe and throughout Africa for workshops, festivals, etc. His creations focus on peace, love, unity, human rights and fighting HIV/AIDS and even has a well-known song called *OYA ntibikongere* ("No, Never Again"). In the past, he has helped organize a workshop and conference for a two-week Martin Luther King Jr. celebration at the National University. Mr. Niwenshuti intends to play a large role in contributing to social change and development in Rwanda and beyond. He hopes to use his skills to eventually work for an NGO that positively impacts society.

Peace Rulinda

Peace works for *Women for Women International* (WFWI) as a Workshop Facilitator and Manual Trainer. She trains vulnerable women supported by the organization—most of whom are survivors of war, conflict, and civil strife. WFWI focuses on moving women and societies from poverty to self-sustainability in order to build a viable civil society. Miss Rulinda has a degree in Public Administration from the National University of Rwanda. She desires to advocate for and help the poor, needy and marginalized groups of society, to make a better country. She believes that empowering youth to be aware of their roles and rights in society will allow them to advocate their needs as well as those of their peers.

Michelle Umuhoza Gumisiriza

Michelle received a degree in law from Kigali Independent University. She currently works as a Facilitator and Coordinator for Never Again Rwanda. She has been active in many clubs, organizations, and associations dealing with HIV/AIDS, genocide and other pertinent issues. Miss Gumisiriza intends to learn the root causes of genocide and how to prevent from happening again. She would like to use what she learns in the human rights workshop to go throughout the country and promote human rights and genocide prevention. She believes this will help end discrimination and intolerance amongst people in Rwanda and elsewhere.

Program Staff Biographies

Jesse Hawkes

*Rwanda Program Director
Global Youth Connect*

Jesse is an accomplished social activist, professional actor and youth development worker currently living and working in Kigali, Rwanda. In addition to serving as GYC's Program Director for Rwanda, Jesse works as program director for RAPSIDA, an HIV/AIDS prevention program of Rwandans and Americans in Partnership, since 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.

Dr. Joseph Ryarasa Nkurunziza
Coordinator
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.

John Connelly
Special Project Assistant for Rwanda
Global Youth Connect

John is a senior at The College of New Jersey majoring in international studies with minors in Spanish and aw, politics & philosophy. He is a member of several service and academic honorary societies and has extensive leadership experience coordinating events and fundraising. He has completed over 200 hours of community service with the Circle K Community Service Organization at his college and was a Drum Corps International World Champion with the Cadets of Bergen

County Drum Corps. During high school, John participated in the National Youth Forum on Defense, Intelligence, and Diplomacy. He co wrote an article in 2005 which was published in the Criminal Law Bulletin entitled ""Incredible Shrinking Amendment" Redux: Continued Erosion of the Fourth Amendment Rights of Students." In the summer of 2006, John interned in the Logistics and Readiness Center for the Department of Defense as well as with AJPRODHO, his fieldwork assignment during the summer 2006 Rwanda Delegation. He has a deep interest in human rights advocacy, foreign policy, and Rwanda in specific. He is most interested in the success of conflict resolution in post-conflict Rwanda, which will be the topic of his senior thesis. In his spare time, John enjoys reading, running, playing the trumpet, community service, and art. After completing his BA, John plans to attend law school and study international law.