



Global Youth Connect

Rwanda Program Report

Human Rights Learning and Action Community for Young Activists and Grassroots NGOs

December 28, 2009 – January 11, 2010

*Co-Organized with the Youth Association for the Promotion of Development
and Human Rights (AJPRODHO)*



***Front left,** GYC Delegate Anuj Gurung (Nepal & USA-D.C.) shares a dance with a resident of the Mubuga “Potters” Community, after our Human Rights Observation/Interview Session with the community members. **Center left,** GYC Delegate Ildephonse (Rwanda – Kigali), works for COPORWA, an NGO which fights for the rights of the “Potters” (people formerly known as Batwa and/or Indigenous). Anuj, Ildephonse and fellow GYC Delegate, Carla de Ycaza (USA-NY)(not pictured), followed the observation visit with a report to fellow International and Rwandan GYC Delegates as part of their cross cultural human rights workshop and subsequently volunteered for COPORWA in Kigali, Rwanda, strategizing how to enable COPORWA to continue its important, effective work for this historically marginalized and stigmatized group of people.*

Global Youth Connect
www.globalyouthconnect.org

In the six months leading up to the Global Youth Connect Winter 2010 Delegation to Rwanda, **an important debate** was taking place in the international community concerning Rwanda's application to become a member of the Commonwealth. On one side, the Commonwealth's independent human rights organization argued against Rwanda's admission, accusing those currently in power in Rwanda of various human rights abuses, including the alleged deaths of up to 500,000 people in the mid to late 1990s and early 2000s, in Rwanda and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.¹ They argued that admission to the Commonwealth would be a rubber-stamp for Rwanda's alleged past atrocities and current human rights abuses, and would not result in future progress.

On the other hand, those in favor of Rwanda being admitted to the Commonwealth disputed the claims regarding the 500,000 deaths and, in addition, argued that more attention should be paid to Rwanda's current progress and that it should be given more tools to overcome the great challenges that it faces. They argued that, should Rwanda be admitted to the Commonwealth, there would be even greater accountability in Rwanda, leading to faster progress, especially in areas such as freedom of the press and expression.²

In the end, in December 2009, Rwanda was admitted to the Commonwealth.

On December 28th, just one week after this momentous decision was made, fifteen US-based international human-rights students and young professionals landed at the airport in Rwanda as part of the Global Youth Connect Winter Human Rights Delegation. Now was their chance to interact with the youth, organizations, and government officials of Rwanda, as well as with international government officials (including representatives from the US Department of State), and to gain invaluable experience and knowledge working with a variety of human-rights NGOs on the ground in Rwanda.

A month before the arrival of the international participants, Global Youth Connect and AJPRODHO had also identified fifteen Rwandan students and young professionals committed to human rights education and protection, provided them with an orientation concerning the workshop topics and site visits, and on December 30th, introduced the Rwandans to their international counterparts and began 12 days of fruitful discussions, field/observation visits, volunteer fieldwork, report creation, and presentations.

New Development for GYC in Rwanda: Birth of the LAC

The level of Rwandan participant involvement in the delegation activities was even higher than it had been in previous delegations – Rwandan youth delegates had the opportunity to make observation visits with the international delegates to a variety of organizations during the workshop, and subsequently were inspired to give of their time and energies to work alongside some of the international delegates with the human rights NGOs in Kigali during the second week of the delegation.

This increased involvement has inspired us to call the full experience for all participants a Learning and Action Community.

¹ Visit page 9 of the PDF

http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/hradvocacy/rwanda%27s_application_for_membership_of_the_commonwealth.pdf

² <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/speech/181889/34293/35178/218975/220110sgrwandamedia.htm>

As with previous delegations, one of **the main purposes and achievements of this delegation was to create a unique opportunity for both international as well Rwandan activists to see Rwanda, and to some extent the rest of the world, through the lens of what we at GYC like to call “culturally sensitive human rights.”** *It’s not about strict cultural relativism—permitting one culture to negate the rights afforded to individuals whose rights may be respected in another culture. We ask the question: Is it possible for us to work together on a variety of issues, even some towards which our cultures may take different stances, and still make progress for us both? During the delegation, International and Rwandan youth alike challenged themselves to both appreciate and question their own biases while exploring the reality of some human rights questions on the ground in Rwanda.*

Other Objectives and Achievements of the Learning and Action Community included:

- Exposing International and Rwandan officials, as well as local Rwandan NGOs, to the spirit, energy, ideas, and observations of the combined International/Rwandan youth delegation, with an aim to enhancing their work and understanding as much as our own
- Contributing to the work of local NGOs through a donation of skills and attention to the NGOs current projects and needs, with an eye towards effectiveness and sustainability of any volunteer actions undertaken

As you can tell by now, we at GYC are very inspired by this work and by what we have seen happening as a result of our exchanges in Rwanda.

It is therefore with great pleasure that we introduce you to the activities and outcomes of this Learning and Action Community through the publishing of this program report.

This report has been developed as collaboratively as possible, with submissions from both the US-based international participants and the Rwandan participants.

We thank you for taking the time to read through this report and hope that it will help you in some small way in your work or personal lives.

If possible, we hope to inspire you to get even more involved in both international human rights engagement and with our work itself.

In Solidarity,

Global Youth Connect

The purpose of this program report is to

Provide context for the youth human rights LAC by providing an update about current social and political developments in Rwanda as seen through our and our partners’ eyes and research

Describe the goals of the LAC and show how they compared to previous GYC delegations to Rwanda - program reports from previous delegations are available by clicking [here](#)

Highlight the outcomes of the LAC, related to our various goals, in a variety of ways including in Executive Summary format

Promote the impressive work of the people and organizations we met – while respecting journalistic standards and our local partners’ anonymity when necessary

Provide some ideas for how readers can take action related to the issues described herein, including fundraising for these LACs in the future, or applying to become a future delegate

Discuss potential future LACs to Rwanda and/or future plans for expanding upon the work in Rwanda in another context, and to detail the most pressing human rights issues that we expect to encounter and address moving forward in both of these respects

Executive Summary

Winter 2010 Human Rights Learning/Action Community in Rwanda

Key Activities:

- Cross-cultural human rights training session for young International and Rwandese activists
- Site/Observation visits conducted by US and Rwandan participants:
 - *The Rwandan National Prosecution Authority*
 - *The Karongi Police Station*
 - *The Mubuga Sector village/forest of the “potter” community*
 - *Youth Theatre Clubs, supported by FACT*
 - *FACT’s Legal Aid beneficiaries*
 - *Single mothers and orphans served by CIMS*
 - *Niboye Peace Village, supported by Uyisenga N’ Manzi*
 - *United States Ambassador to Rwanda and the political officers of the US State Department – engagement about the US State Department’s approach to human rights*
 - *Genocide Memorials: Kigali Memorial Museum, Nyamata Memorial Church, Nyange Secondary School -- where youth resisted dividing themselves into different ethnic groupings in 1997, and who are memorialized as heroes*
 - *INEZA Craft Cooperative of HIV+ Women (many survivors of the 1994 Genocide) H.R. Capitalism*
 - *Gacacas (appeal cases for Category I offenders) in the Gikondo and Kimisagara Sectors of Kigali*
 - *“Differences” – dance piece by GYC Alumni Rebecca Davis and AMIZERO Dance Co. (www.rebeccadavidance.com)*
- Volunteered in Kigali for 4 days with the organizations with whom we conducted observation visits: AJPRODHO, FACT, COPORWA, CIMS, and Uyisenga N’ Manzi/Niboye Peace Village.³
- Held an *Alumni Event*, discussed next steps for advocacy involving GYC Alumni from Rwanda, and the recent success of LGBT advocacy in Rwanda. Article 219 in the penal code criminalizing homosexuality was ultimately dismissed in December 2009, thanks to local, Rwandan advocacy against it, spearheaded by AJPRODHO, HOCA, and numerous Health NGOs.⁴



³ Many Rwandan participants decided to volunteer alongside the US based volunteers during these four days. Something that had not happened previously on GYC Delegations to Rwanda

⁴ See the 2009 Summer Program Report, available on the GYC website, for more information about GYC and AJPRODHO’s involvement in this LGBT advocacy.

How to take action on these important issues!

- **Read through our previous program reports.** They are available by [clicking here](#).
- **Engage with GYC and Our Partners** about the issues you read about in the reports. Give comments. Ask questions. GYC's staff and alumni, as well as the local organizations with whom we partner, are here to listen and respond, and to put you in touch with people who are qualified to provide contacts and help further your ability to take action. *After the publishing of our last program report, we received many comments and questions related to how we can even work in the country of Rwanda, whose government is accused of so many past and current human rights violations, and even crimes against humanity by the Commonwealth's independent watch-dog human rights organization. We encourage anyone who wishes to engage with us to read the reports, and then to write to contact@globalyouthconnect.org with questions, comments and suggestions.*
- **Forward this Program Report far and wide.**

In the USA:

- **Get involved in the GYC Small Grants Fund for Rwanda.** We are raising money to support the organizations and the projects from our Learning and Action Communities in Rwanda that you are reading about right here in this report. Write to contact@globalyouthconnect.org for more info.
- Go to www.globalyouthconnect.org/donate.html to become an active supporter of these grassroots initiatives.
- **Promote the GYC Small Grants Fund for Rwanda** by forwarding this report

In Rwanda:

- **Volunteer for one of these amazing organizations. Donate to their efforts in whatever way you can if their mission inspires you to get involved.**
- **Promote the GYC Small Grants Fund for Rwanda** by forwarding this report

Learning/Action Community: Part 1

Cross Cultural Human Rights Workshop with International and Rwandan Youth:

- We began with a foundation of discussions about cross-cultural dialogue
- We reviewed some of the history of the human rights movement
- We explored a common definition of human rights
- Following the introduction, all of the workshop participants stepped out of the workshop room together to visit the General Prosecutor's Office and the Kigali Memorial Museum.



At the Prosecutor General's office (above) we were briefed on Juvenile Justice Laws in Rwanda and Domestic Violence Laws. Questions from the US and Rwandan delegates focused on learning more about the Theatre-Arts Response groups which are being used to help communities in the aftermath of domestic violence abuses. AJPRODHO's field team were able to inquire about services that should be rendered to detained youth in police stations, as opposed to the prisons, where the services may be better at this time.

I was fascinated by the methods of the Rwandan judicial system in sensitizing the public on various juvenile/gender based crimes [in part through theatre].

Rwanda sometimes tries sexual violence cases at the scene of the crime. I don't agree with it, but very interesting.

Various Evaluations/Reflections From the Workshop:

Though we are worlds apart in terms of geography, the US and Rwandese delegates had common threads in defining human rights – we all agreed on some level.

There remains a significant amount of work to reach a consensus, but the fact that we all are willing to discuss, argue, and explore all these limitations is very crucial and heartening.

Many of us consider human rights to be dependent on governments and law, whereas others consider them to be intrinsic to each human being regardless.

I learned about the bill of human rights and its history and how it came into the minds of the brilliant ladies and gentlemen in the aftermath of world war two.

I got some ideas about human rights, especially different definitions that were given by different groups.

Defining human rights by a group of HR-oriented people is problematic and can be too intellectualized.

One important learning was that women had been deprived of land rights in Rwanda. I appreciated the presentations from CIMS and FACT regarding this issue.

For me what was most affecting was the discussion with the organizations. It allowed for an opportunity to better understand how NGO's work on the ground.

I learned about FACT, so many things, but the most important was that they have a rehabilitation center.

I learned that although it is painful to remember the past, it is necessary to know what happened in order to be able to move forward.

Each of us brings a different les or perspective to the idea of genocide and dealing with the past.

I learned how amazingly forgiving people are and how encouraging they are and from that I learned about life. Though the Rwandan participants may not be as [formally] educated as the US delegates, they have shown to me what wisdom means, what love means.

It seems that much needs to be done to understand the complexity of offenders with abuse histories, and provide social services for them.

SITE VISITS to Our Partner NGOs:

We engaged as a whole workshop on the theme of grassroots action by traveling to the town of Kibuye in the Karongi District.

We split into four observation teams, each going with a representative of one civil society organization, visiting with the staff and beneficiaries, and writing reports.

When we arrived back in Kigali some of the subsequent fieldwork time was spent crafting the following reports as well as assisting the organizations in other capacities which are detailed following these Kibuye Observation reports here.

What are grassroots Rwandan organizations doing to advance change relative to various human rights issues? And how can we, as small teams of motivated youth who know something but not everything about human rights, contribute to their good work, even while learning about it?

COPORWA



COPORWA (www.coporwa.org) is a Non-profit organization working with the Batwa indigenous people of Rwanda. They work for the promotion and protection of the rights of the Batwa, and help them to generate sufficient income. The seat of COPORWA is in Nayrugenge (Kigali), but its activities reach all parts of the country.

COPORWA's objectives are: to enable the Batwa to have an impact on political decisions on a local, national and international level; to Empower the Batwa to take this work upon themselves; to help

the Batwa communities realize the importance of their participation in public decision-making; to improve the socio-economic status of the Batwa and by ensuring that opportunities are more accessible to the communities through facilitating training of skills, research and dissemination of information as well as facilitating access to credit.

COPORWA Kibuye Site Visit

Delegates: Ildephonse NIYOMUGABO (Coporwa Focal Point), Theophile NAMAHO, Carla De Ycaza, Anuj Gurung, Jesse Hawkes, Vincent Kyagabo

In Kibuye, we visited the Mubuga sector with the COPORWA team. We drove for quite a while from the Centre Bethanie where we were staying up the unpaved dirt roads and hills to get to the area where the beneficiaries of COPORWA lived.

Housing

Once we arrived, we exited the vehicle and hiked up the hill into the forest. We were greeted enthusiastically by a young woman named Chantal with her baby and were led to Chantal's house. The houses in the forest were constructed primarily out of what seemed to be banana leaves. There were no permanent structures in which the people in the forest lived. One could easily see how the rain would destroy anything inside the structures, as they were open and exposed to the elements. We then spoke with some other local beneficiaries of COPORWA who lived in the area and observed the unfavorable conditions under which they lived. In 2007, sixteen houses were set aside to be distributed to the potters, but eventually these houses were given to another group. Any house will ideally be located in a hospitable area conducive to generating income by pottery or to acquiring food, water and other amenities.

Healthcare

According to the community members with whom we spoke, the health center is not very far from the forest where they live. They can easily walk there. They had access to free health insurance for 2009, but have been informed that they would need to obtain photographs for their new cards, or Carte Mutuelle, in order to be provided with proof of health insurance for the upcoming year. It was unclear as to whether they would be able to use the

old photographs from their 2009 cards and they are unable to pay for new photographs. When asked why they didn't want to walk to the health center to inquire as to the status of their Carte Mutuelle, they responded that they were so ostracized in the community that as a result, they did not want to make the trip into town. This indicates the pervasiveness of the stigmatization of, and discrimination against, the indigenous people, and only further perpetuates the cycle of poverty and impedes their economic and social development. These individuals are provided with resources but are unable to access them.

Security

We also met with a member of the local defense force during our visit to the Mubuga district. This individual appeared to be somewhat of an advocate of the indigenous people, as his job was to protect their security. He is called into the area when the indigenous people are presented with issues or conflicts. One example given of an instance where he was called in was that some of the indigenous people were in town drinking and were accosted by other men from the town. We found it to be a positive step that an official of the town was on the side of the indigenous people, as representation of this population is severely lacking in both local and national government.

Education

Another discussion centered on the topic of education of community members. There is a primary school near the Mubuga sector; however the indigenous people do not have the means to purchase materials for their children to attend school, especially since their housing is such that the supplies and uniforms would be destroyed by the rain and exposure to the elements. Additionally, when children reach 4th grade, many discontinue their education, as the community needs them to help gather food. They are also not visited by local authorities or representatives, which leads to further discrimination and distancing from society.

Exposure to Media

One observation we made when visiting this community was that we heard the radio playing in one of the houses. Some of the group members were surprised to hear a radio deep in the forest. We were told that some of the families in the

community have radios, but not all. The most common news source via radio was the BBC, according to the members of the community. They explained that they hear on the radio that the situation is improving for the community of potters in Rwanda, but they do not see any concrete evidence of this.

Unity

The Community of Potters is the official name given to the historically marginalized, formerly known as "indigenous" people, by the government of Rwanda as part of the campaign post-1994 to unify and reconcile the division between the Hutu and Tutsi populations. As a result of this campaign to unify Rwanda, the "indigenous" people are left out of the discussion. There are no longer divisions acknowledged, such as "Hutu," "Tutsi" or "Batwa," and as a result, the needs of the most severely historically marginalized group (from Rwandan society), the "batwa", are most often ignored.

When asked by what name the community would like to be addressed, the older members of the group responded that they would prefer to be called the Indigenous People of Rwanda. Their second choice would be to be called the Community of Potters, as it is linked to their specific experience and culture of making pottery. But when pressed at the end of the conversation, they said they are willing to simply call themselves Rwandans if they are truly integrated into Rwandan society and receive the services afforded to other people in Rwanda.

A similar debate exists in the United States surrounding the discussion of affirmative action. Many argue that we should be one society without discussion of division of color, race or ethnicity; however others say that in order to truly be unified, we must acknowledge the history of discrimination against certain groups and repair these inequalities before society can truly be unified.

Future Steps and Needs

We asked the group whether they would choose to be provided with concrete services over obtaining mutual respect from other members of society as the first step in solving their problems, and they responded that they would choose services, as this would help them eventually gain respect. They felt

they were discriminated against due to economic inequalities, and services would help them to gain an equal footing with the rest of the population.

When asked what the smallest things would be that would make a big difference in their lives, they responded that photos for their healthcare cards and school supplies would both be extremely helpful; however due to the complexity of their situation, the provision of these items would not necessarily result in long-term change. For example, if they obtain uniforms but have no soap or water with which to wash them, ultimately they would be destroyed and unusable. Similarly, if they are provided with supplies and do not have a safe and dry place to store them, they would also be destroyed by the rain.

We noted a need for an updated report concerning the conditions of the indigenous population both in Kibuye and throughout Rwanda, perhaps to be presented to the media or government officials to gain further exposure. COPORWA published an annual report in 2007 regarding the situation of the forest dwellers and delivered it to local authorities, but this report has yet to be fully respected.

We discussed some ways that we could act upon what we saw in Kibuye in order to help COPORWA achieve its goals and assist this marginalized population.

- Conducting additional research to follow up on some of the topics mentioned,
- Maintaining further contact with the people in Mubuga sector,
- More resources must be targeted in order to assist in the work of COPORWA and to identify other mechanisms for such support.
- Finding ways to assist in connecting COPORWA with local NGOs and government officials in Rwanda to help the indigenous population are through advocacy, in-kind support, legal aid and mobilizing the media.
- Creating a network of international NGOs with influential people within the network

Conclusions

It is very difficult to forget the past, but is important to be able to move ahead for the future. The indigenous population of Rwanda has historically been marginalized and continues to be ostracized within Rwanda. The challenges that the indigenous community are faced with when confronting the pervasive problems of housing, healthcare, security,

education, socio-economic inequalities and unity are multi-faceted and interconnected. Identifying very basic ways we can address some of these complex problems is the first step toward a long-term solution.

BACK IN KIGALI with COPORWA

By Anuj Gurung

One of the most promising experiences of GYC delegation was the opportunity to volunteer with local NGO's in Kigali. I had the opportunity to assist COPORWA – an organization that is dedicated to the socioeconomic integration of Rwandan indigenous population into the mainstream society – for four working days. From my previous experiences I had learned that indigenous communities were the most ignored and vulnerable population all over the world. It is no different in Rwanda.

I saw the clear glimpse of this marginalization during my visit to the Mubuga sector. People like Chantel were living in a government-owned forest and struggling daily to make ends meet⁵. I had their image in my mind when I started work at COPORWA along with my colleague, Carla De Ycaza. On the first day, we worked on the Global Youth Connect program report, chronicling our visit to Mubuga. We outlined different sectors – education, healthcare, living conditions – that contributed to the perpetuating system of discrimination against the potter community.

The second day of volunteering was relatively short but very intriguing. We first watched the COPORWA documentary that delineated the history and present condition of the indigenous population in Rwanda. Then we had the privilege of meeting with some university students – there are a total of ten in the entire nation - from the indigenous community. The agenda of the students was simple and straightforward - they wanted us to know that the severe discrimination of the indigenous people was continuing unabated, aided by various myths – Batwa's are foolish; Batwa's aren't fit for privileges like cars. The passion was quite apparent in the voice and expression of the students. It was a very interactive

⁵ A more detailed account of this field visit is submitted to GYC as part of the program report.

session; the students were very interested in our opinions and perceptions of their community in Rwanda.

The third day consisted of us trying to work out the website situation for COPORWA. While COPORWA had a functional website, the staff was unable to edit the content of the website as per the need. Neither me nor Carla were proficient enough to help COPORWA in their website endeavor. During my tenure, I observed that COPORWA officers/ employees were very interested in communicating COPORWA's work to the rest of the world, especially through the Internet. However, they lacked basic infrastructure (like an Internet connection and ample computers) and knowledge about web hosting. I contacted Wouter Thiebou, who had set up the website for COPORWA, investigating possible measures. He relayed the same message that COPORWA needed a staff member with basic web design and webhosting skills to move ahead with the website project.

On the final day, we showed the director of COPORWA the video Carla had shot during our field visit to Mubuga. The video contained our conversations and interactions with the indigenous community, as well as a traditional dance at the conclusion of our visit. We made copies of the video and related pictures for COPORWA. I also provided a basic framework for COPORWA to proceed with their website endeavor; I listed basic resources necessary to start the project. In the afternoon, we met with the director; we exchanged ideas about further action and remaining in communication with each other. As a friendly gesture, COPORWA gave us potteries made by "potter" craftsmen as parting gifts.

Our volunteering came at a time when COPORWA was being evaluated by a French organization for efficacy. There are some simple steps that COPORWA can take, based on my observation. It should invest (when feasible) in training its staff in updating websites and emailing in order to keep in contact with various stakeholders.

In the end, it was a good lesson in learning the challenges of a small NGO. I can only imagine the diurnal chaos in an organization that has undertaken a very difficult job – representing and advocating a historically marginalized group. I see it already does so much good. For example, all the indigenous university students seemed to be in very good relation with the organization. Moreover,

initiatives like documentaries help the organization certainly. As a part of GYC alumni, I can help spread the word of COPORWA in the US, or wherever possible.

I can do simple tasks to help COPORWA. This is what COPORWA seems to be doing quite efficiently and consistently.



AJPRODHO – Youth Association for Human Rights Promotion and Development (www.ajprodho.org) -- GYC's local partner organization on the delegation. AJPRODHO's activities in Kibuye include a legal aid project that impacts detainees at the Bwishyura police station.

The observation team: Alice Muhoza (AJPRODHO Focal Point), Umurerwa Emerance, Jean Claude Rwibasira, Luis Soberon, Johonna McCants, Tyler Branscome, Brannon Miller, Nicky Fox, Alisha Mehta

Our objective was to monitor whether or not the human rights of the detainees at the police station were being respected, both before and during our visit, with an eye toward the future.

- Gathering information from detainees about:
 - Their living conditions
 - The length of their detention
 - Their treatment by the police
- Advocating for the human rights of detainees at Bwishyura police station
- Sharing experiences and conditions of detainees and prisoners in Rwanda and the U.S.

Target groups

The target groups were children and vulnerable youth who are facing criminal prosecution and who are detained at Bwishyura detention centre. A child/minor is someone who is under 18 years old, and a youth is under 35 years old. These groups were targeted based on the background of AJPRODHO and the appearance of the detainee against the assessment of all stakeholders involved.

Activity Summary:

On the first day, we arrived at the police station to gather testimonials from the detainees about their living conditions, treatment by police, and overall safety while detained. After receiving this information, the group decided to return the next morning to gather more insights on the current condition of the detainees. The team heard about multiple cases of torture, lack of food/clean water, and dangerous living conditions. The group then met with the police chief, Police Commandant Musoni, to communicate these problems and ask for assistance in providing medical attention for those at the station who were seriously ill.

Achieved Results:

- Gathered information from children, youth, and non-youth
- Advocated for detainees (with police chief)
- Interviewed detainees for one hour
- Obtained a general view of the human rights situation for detainees and prisoners in Rwanda
- Planned follow-up
- Provided detainees with money to get medical treatment
- Obtained photographs of team visiting with detainees
- Ensured 5 sick detainees were transported to the hospital

Some Key Lessons Learned:

- The Legal Aid Project can accomplish more with the assistance of volunteers
- The Legal Aid Project can quickly and easily engage and use volunteers; extensive training is not needed

How results and lessons learned will be shared with others:

- The team has made two presentations on the visit to Global Youth Connect participants
- A newspaper article on the visit was published by the New Times in the 5 January 2010 edition
- This activity report will be disseminated to AJPRODHO staff and all stakeholders, including the police chief
- The project coordinator will brief the AJPRODHO staff at the next management commitment meeting
- The team will speak with Rwandan media at a press conference organized by Global Youth Connect staff in conjunction with AJPRODHO
- Summaries and personal reflections will be published in the Global Youth Connect program report (documentation of the Winter 2010 delegation).

Conclusion

The team felt that the monitoring and advocacy visit to the Bwishyura police station was successful.

- By conducting detainee interviews at the Bwishyura police station for two days as well as aiding in the proper medical treatment of five detainees, the team obtained an understanding of the human rights situation for detainees.
- Team members were impressed with the level of access to the detainees that they received. U.S. delegates also noted various parallels and differences between U.S. prisons and the Bwishyura police station and many were inspired to do prisoner rights advocacy work upon returning to the United States.
- Delegates also stated that the organizations working on the visit—Global Youth Connect and AJPRODHO—should continue recruiting American and Rwandan volunteers to participate in the Legal Aid Project's monitoring and advocacy visits.

The visit to the Police Detention center in Karongi helped AJPRODHO and its mission to protect the rights of youth in Rwanda. The fact that we were a mixed group of people, from the US and Rwanda, gave us a different kind of power than we normally have in the center. We drew upon the various skills of the participants to quickly develop a much improved client sheet/questionnaire, which we used to interview the detainees on the second day of the visit. The only thing I can say that would improve the situation is to have a conference with other local authorities in the community, not just the police chief, after the visit. We can even combine this with informing the authorities about the other situations we visit and observe in Karongi as well, with other orgs like FACT, CIMS, and COPORWA. Let's do this in July! -- AJPRODHO Representative

Questions for Individual Detainees:

1. *How have you been treated by police? If there were problems, did they hurt you?*
2. *Have you been told why you are here?*
3. *Have you been informed of your rights?*
4. *Did you receive the arrest warrant form after interrogation? If yes, did you understand what the form says?*
5. *Has your family been informed of your detention? If not, were you given the opportunity to contact them?*
6. *Have you been questioned by police? If yes, did you have a lawyer or representative present with you? How did the police treat you during questioning?*
7. *Were you detained somewhere else before? If yes, where?*
8. *Based on what you know about human rights, have any of your human rights been violated?*
9. *Do you have any major concerns about your condition/detention?*

Post-Site-Visit Reflections - Tyler Branscome

Human rights. The term can mean multiple things based on the person defining it. For some, human rights can be different based on the culture or country it resides in, while for others, human rights are universal and given to us because we are human. Throughout our differences, however, the AJPRODHO team agreed on one thing: human rights are not only essential but also required in Rwanda's detention centers. From the moment we stepped on the Bwishyura police station grounds, we made it our goal to monitor whether or not the human rights of the detainees at the police station were being respected, both before and after our visit.

Reality

Walking up to the detention cells, I already had a pit in my stomach. It wasn't hard to acknowledge that something was not right. Alice, our AJPRODHO staff member who accompanied us on our trip to Kibuye, walked up to a police officer who had lined up a group of male detainees outside of their cells. A negotiating genius, Alice persuaded the police chief to ask the police officers to back away from the detainees so that the detainees could disclose to the team the truth about their living situations at the police station. As we began asking the detainees questions about their living situations and treatment by police, Luis turned me around to see a group of young men, probably minors, in a cell behind us. They were reaching out to us, beckoning us in. My heart twisted in remorse while Luis inquired as to why we were not allowed to speak to those detainees. Alice asked the police chief if we could speak to the detainees and the police chief responded, "Time has run out. Your visit is over now."

As we began asking the detainees questions, stories spilled out of their mouths. One detainee asked if there was anything we could do to help him because he had not eaten in a week. Another detainee asked if the things he told us would have any impact on him because he had told his story before and did not know the results of his testimony. Many others insisted they were innocent, but because of lack of representation and lack of communication with the outside world, they were unable to have their cases appealed or heard by others. Another detainee told us the story of how, as he had been accused of theft and was awaiting trial, the police had sold off his property that housed his seven children and wife. As we began to hear from a detainee accused of embezzlement, the police chief walked up to tell us we had run out of time. We realized what needed to be done--we had to return. The police chief, believing we were leaving the next day, informed us that he would have let us visit again but we were leaving so it would be impossible. Immediately, the group agreed that returning early the next morning would not be a problem. The police chief, surprised, agreed under the terms that we must be there at 8am sharp and we would only have 30 minutes. We were ready for the challenge.

We returned to the AJPRODHO district office and planned out how we would conduct our interviews. In three small groups (each group including one Rwandan participant), we would first ask group questions for a general

overview of the living situations and descriptions of the detainees. Next, we would ask individual questions that required more detailed and unique answers based on the story of each detainee at the station. By the end of the day, the team had produced the template and was prepared for action.

The Emergency

At 8am, our group returned to a very different police station. Some of the detainees were cleaning the ground with brooms, were dressed in nicer clothes, and were accompanied by multiple new detainees whom we had not interviewed before. The police chief, in uniform, welcomed us and moved the police officers out of earshot so we could have our time with the detainees. We split the group into three sections and immediately began our interviews. The testimonials we received were vivid and emotional. Some detainees had not eaten for two weeks. Others showed us fresh wounds from reportedly being beaten by police officers.

I looked to my right and saw a boy hunched over, coughing and spitting green phlegm onto the ground. The boy was very sick, possibly suffering from bronchitis, and I did not think he had much longer to live unless he received medical attention. Alice's focus turned to the boy and she discovered that although the police had written on his arrest form that he was 20, he was actually 15, a minor. He had not received medical attention because he could not afford it due to a lack of medical insurance. Four others, two with injuries from reportedly being beaten and two with HIV, were similarly extremely ill and probably had very little time until they succumbed to their illnesses and injuries. After receiving our information, we met with the police chief and asked for explanations of the blatant disregard to the detainees' human rights. The police chief denied most the claims made by the detainees and said that no torture or mistreatment was occurring at his station. Acknowledging that we were currently in a "he said, she said" dilemma, our focus turned to the sick detainees. The group offered to donate money to pay for the medical fees of the five detainees so they could be treated at the hospital. The police chief agreed, noting his thanks at our generosity. He promised that within the hour, the five detainees would be escorted to the hospital. I left the police station with cautious optimism.

The Final Stand

One hour later, Alice, Aisha, Luis, and I hopped on four motorbikes and headed to the

hospital to ensure the delivery of the detainees. When we arrived, we only saw three detainees. The police officer had no excuse as to why all five did not arrive so we asked where the other two were. After being informed that they were both at a Gacaca hearing, we gave money to the three detainees, insisting that the money only be spent on medical fees and not be confiscated by the police officer for personal use. We arrived at the gacaca hearing to find only one of the two remaining detainees. We quickly gave him his money and headed to the police station where we found the final detainee. We gave him his money and informed the officers that we would be confirming tomorrow if all the detainees had received proper medical attention. Leaving the station for a second time, our optimism had increased significantly, knowing that we had not only made an impact on the five detainees we helped financially, but also on the Bwishyura police station that reaffirmed that AJPRODHO will continue to be a constant presence as a watchdog for human rights.

FACT – (www.fact.org.rw) FACT Rwanda is a health and human rights organization formed in 1999 by human rights activists-physicians, lawyers, psychologists and medical students of the National University of Rwanda. FACT Rwanda works to end torture and violence in the Great Lakes Region and offers rehabilitation to survivors of torture and violence. FACT offers free, confidential and accessible service to victims of torture and violence, with 2 Centres (Kigali and Karongi/Kibuye). They also have a legal aid project in Karongi and support youth clubs that sensitize communities about solutions for ending domestic violence.

Visit in Kibuye

Team Members: Caleb NINSIMA and Ernest Dukuze (FACT Focal Points), Carrie O'Neil, Samora Covington, Marcel Kaba, Nadege Uwase, Pascal Ruberwa, Eric Gisa, Aisha UMUKOBWA, Germaine UWABAREZE

Objectives: To visit the legal aid clinic that FACT operates in Karongi and to meet with one of the Human Rights clubs that FACT supports to get a better idea of the work that the organization is doing in the Western Province.

Activities: The group spent the morning visiting the FACT office and getting acquainted with the organization's work. The Legal Aid Project's objective is to raise awareness in the community about Gender Based Violence (GBV) by addressing cultural norms and traditions. In addition to providing legal aid and referrals, awareness-raising activities include sensitization through human rights clubs in schools and communities, and creating linkages between like-minded organizations and stakeholders.

We then had the opportunity to meet with one of the human rights clubs, called the Allied Friends Club, led by the club president, Donatille. The club began in 2007 as an income-generating effort and has since transitioned into a GBV prevention and awareness association. Their activities include educating people about their rights, mediating community and family conflicts, and participating in drama competitions and activism efforts (organized by FACT). Among their most pressing organizational constraints were lack of resources and a need for teaching modules and trainings about GBV to increase the capacity of their members.

Our discussion was guided by a presentation from Donatille and followed by opportunities to ask questions and discuss GBV issues in Rwanda and the US. The members of the club gave anecdotal evidence about the drop in instances of GBV in their community since they started their work on the grassroots level, mediating family disputes and raising awareness about these issues. They identified the root causes of GBV in their communities as the way traditional Rwandan culture defines and perpetuates the roles of women and men and the poverty that affects their community.

Reflections: As a group we were impressed by the club's organization, leadership, initiative and proven effectiveness despite resource and support challenges. Donatille is a strong, vocal leader and spoke passionately about the need for training and education in order to continue to do their work. FACT just began working with this club and both groups were excited about the potential for stronger partnerships in the future. The meeting ended with the youngest member of the club reciting a poem that she had written about the challenges of being a young woman in Rwanda. She won the poetry section of the FACT drama competition with her

performance and everyone in the group was moved by her poise, maturity and performance.

As we discussed how to potentially tie our experiences in Kibuye with our FACT volunteer work in Kigali, our group considered how to extend training modules to groups like Allied Friends, as well as how to potentially build the organizational and leadership capacity of the Human Rights Clubs to ensure sustainability, development and continued capacity building.

In Kigali, the work with FACT entailed editing a project proposal to the European Union for work with the UNHRC and Refugees in Rwanda, as well as meetings/visits with beneficiaries of the rehabilitation clinic.

CIMS – Center for Social Mobilization – (www.cims-rwanda.org) or email Damien Mwambiri at mwambiri@cims-rwanda.org. -- CIMS mediates land disputes and helps the government to register land equitably in several targeted areas of the country, including Karongi. In the center of Kibuye, CIMS has been focusing on tracking individuals who are victims of land scarcity and who therefore have a variety of related problems that CIMS feels it is uniquely positioned to understand and assist with. *GYC has worked with CIMS before (see Summer 2009 report).*

CIMS OBSERVATION TEAM in KIBUYE:

Members: Angelique Maombi (CIMS Focal Point), Oliver Wyckoff, Khaled Fayyad, Andrea Niehaus, Gabin MBANJUMUCYO

Objectives:

Our objective for Kibuye was to meet with the president of CIMS, Damien Mwambiri, and to listen to the testimonials of the beneficiaries of CIMS' programs in Kibuye, in order to better understand CIMS' work in the region. We met with single mothers, a former street-child, at-risk youth, and historically marginalized populations. We listened to their testimonies and their experiences with CIMS and the impact it has had on their daily lives.

CIMS' Beneficiaries in Kibuye:

Single Mothers: Single mothers in Rwanda are often left in desperate situations. Their families may choose to disown them for having a child out

of wedlock, and the fathers abandon them, inhibiting them from inheriting land. Abortion in Rwanda is illegal and contraception is still a taboo subject. These young new mothers are then forced to fend for themselves and their children.

CIMS assists single mothers through programs that educate them on the 2005 Organic Land Law; CIMS mediates between single mothers and the children's fathers; and CIMS educates single mothers on family planning and reproductive health.

During our Kibuye visit, CIMS arranged for GYC delegates to meet with five single mothers. Each mother shared her story and explained what effect her involvement with CIMS has had on her life. Mother Two was 20 years old when she became pregnant. She no longer had the means to study and was forced to drop out of school. She told us, "Life was hard. I didn't have the means to raise a child and to study." She told us she would like to return to school so that she might have the opportunity to give her child a better life. CIMS is helping Mother Two with income-generating projects, and has also counseled Mother Two on reproductive health and the resources available to her, such as free contraception methods available at the local hospital.

Street-Children: Because street-children are often orphans, or have been forced out of their households, CIMS provides education pertaining to land inheritance, and investigates on behalf of street children to find their land. CIMS also acts as a conduit, connecting street children to families with available resources.

CIMS arranged for us to meet a 14 year old boy who formerly lived on the streets. He has a mother, but she was too poor to properly take care of him, and he would often return home from school to find nothing to eat. After he dropped out of school, his family was still unable to provide him with enough food to survive, so he left home to fend for himself on the streets. Soon, he was abusing drugs to distract himself from his situation. He told us he was angry about his situation and that "everyone was his enemy."

CIMS found this boy living on the streets and was able to place him in a family with enough resources to care for him. He is now excited about returning to school. He attends meetings with CIMS everyday at 3 pm and tries to bring his friends so that CIMS can assist them as well.

At-Risk Youth: Mostly comprised of orphans, children living with HIV, and children unable to afford school fees. CIMS seeks out at-risk youth, assesses their challenges and problems, and provides counseling. CIMS also educates at-risk youth on their civil rights and links them to social services that may be available to them through the Rwandan government and/or other NGOs.

We met with over 20 at-risk children that CIMS has brought together for counseling. One such child, a 12 year old orphaned girl living with HIV, told us that she receives medicine and counseling from the local hospital, however, the pills often make her fatigued and sick because she has no choice but to take them on an empty stomach. She wanted to find an organization that would bring together other children in her situation to share ideas and "to make life better." She has been meeting with other children through CIMS.

Historically Marginalized Populations: Mostly comprised of the indigenous population, widows, and the homeless, CIMS assists these groups to organize into effective coalitions, educates them on effective land use (how to produce the largest yield from small amounts of land), introduces them to the social services available, and advises them on effective political advocacy techniques.

We met with a group of 16 historically marginalized peoples that have been working with CIMS for two months. One woman spoke on behalf of the group:

"I am a woman living in a bad situation. Some of these women are homeless. Some have turned to prostitution; some are HIV positive; some are illiterate. We have turned to CIMS, which is giving us hope." When asked how CIMS is giving them hope, the woman told us CIMS has brought them together and now they know they are not alone. They are working together through CIMS and are hoping to institute income-generating projects. In addition, CIMS has taught them how to plant small gardens to help feed themselves and their children.

Challenges:

The main challenge that we faced in Kibuye was the language barrier. Fortunately, CIMS volunteer Angelique, and other GYC delegates Gabin and Germaine assisted us with translation in addition to contributing to the work.

Conclusion:

We observed that CIMS's most important role in the community was networking and acting as a conduit for social change, specifically related to land issues. Because CIMS is such a trusted community leader, they are able to expand their services beyond the specific legal dimensions of land reform and the 2005 Organic Land Law. CIMS cultivates a strong sense of community through their emphasis on the use of volunteers.

Back in Kigali with CIMS:

We documented testimonies from various groups of people who were benefiting from the work of CIMS on the ground. These groups included single mothers and at-risk youth. We created bios for, and took pictures of, these individuals.

We also laid the foundations for a monthly newsletter to be added to a CIMS e-mail list-serv. This template will serve to inform CIMS contacts on their current achievements and challenges.

EN ROUTE TO KIBUYE



Muhanga (Gitarama) Stadium

By Brannon Miller

On our trip to Kibuye, the delegation stopped by several sites of historic significance. Amongst these was the soccer stadium in Muhanga (formerly

Gitarama). It was here that in 1959, Rwandans declared themselves independent from their Belgian colonizers. One would expect that the site of such an important event in the history of Rwanda would be designated a national monument; however, when we arrived there, what we found was an old, abandoned soccer stadium. There were no gift shops or tour guides. Not even a plaque or a sign to show that this was in any way a place of cultural or historical significance could be found. This was because the first post-independence government had a Hutu-power ideology, which ultimately led to waves of massacres and the 1994 Genocide. Many Rwandans feel uncomfortable with anything that could be seen as a celebration of that government; most Rwandans do not even celebrate Independence Day (July 1), choosing instead to celebrate Liberation Day (July 4), which marks the end of the 1994 genocide. As one Rwandan delegate stated, to celebrate the old government would be to celebrate their beliefs, which they do not want to do; instead, they celebrate the new government, which they feel better represents Rwandan society as a whole.



Nyange Secondary School

by Nicole Fox and Jean Claude RWIBASIRA

After visiting the stadium where Rwanda's first president was buried, our delegation continued on our journey to Nyange Secondary School in the Kibuye providence. Before meeting the former principal of the school, our delegation stood in awe of the beautiful scenery, taking photos of the green rolling hills in front of us. It was difficult to fathom, like many places in Rwanda, that mass violence and bloodshed occurred a little over a decade ago on such glorious land.

We flooded into a classroom and delegates took their place in familiar feeling school desks. The principal explained the recent history of this school. In 1997, following the genocide a few years earlier, a refugee camp was disbanded over the border between Rwanda and Zaïre, now the Democratic Republic of Congo, causing a mass repatriation of genocide refugees and rebels back into Rwanda.



This allowed several genocidaires to filter back into Rwanda, particularly in the Kibuye province. They carried out massacres throughout the province and infiltrated the community in such a way as to learn the various backgrounds of several families, in order to kill the people known as Batutsi.

On the night of March 18th, 1997 the Interahamwe raided the Nyange Secondary School, by surrounding the dining halls and student classrooms. The Interahamwe, well equipped with weapons, entered the sixth grade classroom demanding that the students separate into two groups: Hutu and Tutsi. The students, without consulting one another, refused, declaring they were all Rwandese; a powerful, bold and brave move that cost six of them their lives. As the principal told this painful story he pointed to where the militia came from, what angles they took to surround the school, how they killed the guards, so precisely, as if it were yesterday.

The former-principal went on to discuss how this striking move by the students to refuse to separate and see themselves as anything but a unified community of Rwandese, did not happen in a social vacuum. Rather, the principal himself had completed reconciliation trainings that he then implemented these lessons into his school. These can be thought of as so successful that even under

the immense terror of having their lives threatened, the students, without a breath of hesitation or democratic discussion, refused to separate. The end resulted in the death of six students and two guards and an additional eighteen others injured. Hardly the moral end one would have hoped for such brave children and adults.

The Militia staged another attack on school a year later, when the students were gone and teachers were preparing their lessons. They then took concerted efforts to track down where the teachers and principal lived, shooting both the principal and his wife but killing neither.



It was difficult for many to understand how the sun shines over such a beautiful area day after day, while those who exhibited such bravery were buried to the right of us. After hearing the principal's testimony our delegation headed for the grave of one of the heroic youth named for a moment of silence. We honored those who gave their lives, at a young age for what they believed to be right and true; may we all be that brave in our own lives. Our moment of silence brought no one back, but the testimonies from the Nyange Secondary School was a reminder of both the horrors of post-genocide violence and the power of reconciliation education for youth. Our delegation worked to honor both survivors and those killed in Nyange Secondary School in the social justice work we did in the following days at our field sites in Kibuye.

UYISENGA N' MANZI:

In addition to working with the four organizations with which we engaged in Kibuye, we also had a chance to work more deeply with an organization that we have been working with and reporting about now for many years: Uyisenga n'Manzi!

Uyisenga N' Manzi (www.uyisenganmanzi.org) contributes 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, placing them in child-headed households and supporting their villages in a variety of ways. You can learn more about Uyisenga N'Manzi by reading an excerpt of an article written by a previous delegation member in the [2006 GYC program report](#) on Rwanda, which was the first time we ever worked with Uyisenga. Since 2006, we have been mainly visiting Uyisenga's peace village with our entire delegation and then volunteering in Uyisenga's office. On this delegation, however, we made a point to return the favor to the Niboye Peace village, which had been opening their doors for us for the past few years for our visits. We placed some volunteers at the village for several days of creative pilot projects with an aim toward sustainability, development, and fun!⁶

The Report from the Volunteers:

At the children's Peace Village there are 118 people residing in 24 homes, headed by youth. Many children live with their siblings and the heads of households range from 17 to 28 years old. Some of the residents of the village have jobs and others attend school. Depending on their individual situation, children receive scholarships for school fees and health insurance from the genocide survivors fund provided by the federal government. Others rely on donations from individuals, NGOs,

⁶ The delegation as a whole visited the Niboye Peace Village of child-headed households supported by Uyisenga n' Manzi – getting a tour of some of the proud youth's homes, gardens, and public spaces and sharing conversations, some casual and silly, some more formal and serious. The time that we shared together was valuable, and we also started to lay the groundwork for the four GYC volunteers to come back to work on their projects.

and private corporations. There are communal gardens where families can get a portion of their food..

Four GYC volunteers (Louis Soberon, Samantha Howland, Alisha Mehta, and Nicky Fox) worked together with Uyisenga's liaison to, and former member of, the village, GYC delegate Vincent Kyagabo, to create three activities for the children of Uyisenga N'Manzi for four days, four hours a day.

These activities were yoga, bracelet making and photography. The winter break can be a busy time for the village as all of the children are home from school. These activities provided a creative space for children on their winter vacation, allowing the heads of households to either participate or have time to catch up on household needs.



Yoga~ Louis Soberon

In general, the practice of yoga is meant to calm a turbulent mind. For children, it provides a physical outlet for unspent energy and a technique to calm themselves and focus on present tasks. My goal at the peace village was largely to introduce poses and exercises that the children would be able to use after our 45 minute – 1 hour sessions.

At the Peace Village, I focused on breathing techniques and simple poses while maintaining an atmosphere of open playfulness. Translation was offered by our Rwandan colleagues, but it was largely unnecessary because the children followed by example. The first day was a general introduction, the second we did poses named after animals, and the third day we focused on warrior poses. We would incorporate the poses

into a larger message about mental steadiness and calm. In doing the poses, we emphasized breathing consistently and deeply. At the end of every session, we would sit for at least 1 minute silently breathing with our eyes closed.

Children are now practicing yoga on their own and village leaders are encouraging more children to join in practicing on a daily basis. After morning sessions, they would ask to learn and play with more poses showing interest. In a brief survey, they were asked what they learned from the activities. The response was roughly that they learned how to find “peace inside”.

Bracelets~ Samantha Howland

The goal of the bracelet project was to teach the children how to make several different types of floss bracelets. This is a fun project and allows the children to learn a new skill and has the capacity to reduce stress and provide an income generating activity. This activity also allows the children to utilize their creativity and work cooperatively with their friends.

During the four-day period I taught a small group of children how to make 3 different bracelet designs. On the first day, we started with the most basic pattern which all of the children mastered. On the second and third day we moved on to more complex patterns which some of the older children were able to master and will teach the younger children. Each child was working on a final bracelet on the last day and by the time we left many of them had made beautiful final products.

Some of the leaders of the Peace Village also learned how to make the bracelets, so they can continue to teach the children. Translation was not always necessary because the children were able to watch me and imitate how I made the bracelets. I also gave the village a book with different patterns and lots of extra string to keep practicing. Hopefully they will continue to work on their technique, teach other children that were not present, and sell their finished products to generate income for the village.

Photography~ Nicky Fox & Alisha Metha

Our objective for the photography project was to teach the children how to utilize photography as a means of expression. For the first day we showed them different types of photographs that both expressed diverse emotions and used a variety of techniques. On the second day we began to explore the use of photography as a narrative and this included a story about how a group of children

living in a red light district in Calcutta, India, used photography to express what their life was like. We also discussed how **photography has the possibility to shape history through lasting images and briefly touched upon photography as a healing experience, a way to express sorrows, challenges and joy where words fail.** After our discussion, we split the children up in groups and had them practice with digital cameras a variety of angles. The children were given six words: Rwandese, Happiness, Sadness, Life, Faith, and Beauty. The children were instructed to take photos of what happiness means to them.

On day three, we handed out disposable cameras to the children. Two children shared one camera, each having an opportunity to take 12 photos. They were instructed to take photos of things that were meaningful to them. Many took photos of the six words mentioned above, even though they were free to take photos of anything that was meaningful. After the photos were taken, we developed the cameras at a local store, and made booklets of 14 half sheets of paper bound together with ribbon.

On day four, all the children received their photos with much excitement. They glued their photos into their books and decorated their books with stickers, crayons and markers. The children then presented their books with explanations of the subject and camera angles of each photo. For example one took a photo of the sky and glued it next to a photo taken of the ground. This was to show the viewed “heaven and earth.” Several took photos of their homes and their siblings doing laundry and dishes to show “daily life.” Others took photos of their gardens and favorite fruit trees to express “life”. Several took photos of what they saw as “Rwandese.” These ranged from cassava plants and motos to panoramic photos of the hills.

Conclusion:

While each of the activities were different in significant ways, each project has a long term impact for the children and the entire village. Some of the village leaders have talked about how they hope to include yoga on a more daily basis in the village and reflected on the fact that the bracelets provided an opportunity for the children to get motivated and focused for an extended amount of time. Both the leaders and children were excited about the prospect of gaining revenue for the craftwork, which would allow them to be more financially independent. The photography project allowed the children to have a tangible portfolio of

their various memories. The leaders commented that the book would help to shape meaning in their future. The children were very proud of what they created. One child commented that, "I will save this forever."

The four of us have discussed further with the leaders about feasible ways to replicate these projects in the future. Some of the elder children in the village may lead upcoming projects and the leaders requested assistance in finding local volunteers for the future endeavors. The past four days were very meaningful for both us as American delegates, and the children, gaining greater understanding of each other's lives and cultures. Finally, in the evaluation survey the children responded that these activities helped them most by "building peace in the village and in them."

Next Steps:

Having talked to village leaders, one of the most vital needs was funding for school fees and insurance. After reviewing the annual budget for 2008, we concluded that it cost roughly \$100 per student to attend school, which includes all fees. As a group, including members of our home-stay, we discussed various methods of fundraising that we could implement in the United States to benefit Uyisenga N'Manzi. One of the most feasible ideas was to start a project called, "Every Student for Every Child," which would be run in multiple universities to encourage every university student to donate a minimum of a dollar to a child in the Peace Village. We will request that Uyisenga N'Manzi send us a copy of their annual budget concerning school fees and other materials, so that we can accurately determine how to allocate funds. We will also remain in contact with the village leaders to see where funds and materials have been placed. We would greatly encourage cooperation and collaboration with the Rwandese delegates, so that they can also fundraise in their universities.

Also, we hope to promote Uyisenga N'Manzi in the United States, to make university students aware of their programs and opportunities. On a micro level, we wish to network with Rwandese delegates to try and connect Rwandese with volunteer positions at Uyisenga N'Manzi so they will have continued support both during holiday breaks and on a more daily basis.

OTHER SITE VISITS OF THE LEARNING AND ACTION COMMUNITY

U.S Embassy Kigali, U.S. State Department

With reporting from Khaled Fayyad and GYC Staff

GYC delegates were so thankful and honored to attend a meeting with U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda W. Stuart Symington and embassy political officers Edward Bestic and Jennifer Foltz to discuss the role of the U.S State Department in promoting human rights in Rwanda and to share with them our impressions of Rwanda and the U.S.

The meeting focused on matters that GYC had been involved in throughout its time in the country, and gave us confidence that the voices of our Learning and Action Community are being heard. The officials thanked us for the questions and mentioned that it is good to have dialogue with NGOs, especially local Rwandan NGOs for sharing of ideas and information.

Ambassador Symington eloquently introduced us to the work that the U.S. Government (USG) is doing in Rwanda *vis a vis* human rights. He then asked the GYC Delegates to comment on the most important experiences they had had in the country to-date. GYC Delegate Anuj Gurung mentioned that his most meaningful experience in Rwanda consisted of his visit with the "Potter"/indigenous people in Karongi. His visit to the forest enlightened him on the similarities that exist between vastly different worlds. "Although we may come from very different cultures and socioeconomic positions, we are essentially one," said Anuj.

After our conversation with the Ambassador, we discussed the goals of the U.S. State Department in Rwanda with the political officers. One of the traditional functions of U.S. embassy officers is to witness diplomatic moves internationally, interpret them and report them back to the decision makers in Washington. In addition, one role of the U.S. Embassy Kigali political section is to research and report on the human rights situation in Rwanda through the U.S. State Department's annual Human Rights Report. While the report focuses mainly on civil and political rights, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) focuses on public health, food security, and economic development.

To write the Human Rights Report, which is available to the public online, the embassy officers engage with government officials, NGOs, religious groups, and their colleagues in Washington. One of the main challenges to writing an accurate report is the human resources necessary to fact-check every case and media story relating to the human rights situation in the country.

We discussed the ways in which the Human Rights Report differs from the reporting of the independent organization that monitors the Commonwealth nations (see the introduction to this program report) and learned that the U.S. State Department relies on primary source material, while the Commonwealth report used many secondary source materials. The USG uses the Human Rights Report to engage with government officials on human rights improvements and concerns.

Other topics of discussion included:

- The USG's interest in promoting regional stability, especially in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- How the USG is perceived in regards to their own human rights issues
- The trafficking in persons situation in Rwanda
- The progress made and challenges remaining on LGBT rights in Rwanda
- The improvements in the Rwandan prison system as demonstrated by the Special Court for Sierra Leone's decision to send some prisoners to Rwanda
- Reconciliation and peace-building programs in Rwanda such as TIG (community service for incarcerated Rwandans) and the One Cow Per Family program.



INEZA (<http://inezacooperative.wordpress.com/>)
By Samantha Howland

The Ineza Women's Cooperative in Kigali is a co-operative started by the group WE-ACTx to provide employment, support, and a community for women who were raped during the 1994 genocide and who had contracted HIV via rape.

Twenty-five women currently work at the co-op where they hand-make crafts such as handbags, dresses, ties, toys, and slippers. The women are their own bosses and determine their own hours and wages, production and prices of their products, which empowers them to take control of their lives.



Through the co-op the women have had the opportunity to attend business classes which gives them the necessary resources to run their own successful business.

The women are also participating in an English class to enhance their language abilities. It is clear that the Ineza co-op provides a vital source of employment for these women while at the same time creates a safe environment for the women to work and heal.

The Learning and Action Community was fortunate to have an intimate visit to the co-op where we purchased some beautiful hand-crafts and spoke with the women.

Through our translator, the women told us how grateful they were for our visit and support and encouraged us to visit for a second time.

We had two wonderful visits and were glad to support such a worthy cause. This co-op was integral to helping these women cope and heal from the trauma they suffered during the genocide, while also providing them with steady income.

This was an excellent example of how Rwandese people are employing creative methods to recover and prosper in the post-genocide era.



Alumni Network Meeting and Delegation Press Conference:

As per usual, the Learning and Action Community finished with an alumni sharing and networking meeting with numerous Rwandan participants, some of whom had first attended a GYC event in Rwanda in January 2006.

The Rwandan Alumni committee collected alumni updates and the current US and Rwandan participants shared with the alumni what they had accomplished during the current delegation.

Guest speakers spoke to the combined group of youth activists on the topics of:

- The role of youth in development

- The role of Rwandan organizations and activists in the recent overturning of the article in the Rwandan Penal Code (219) which would have criminalized homosexuality.

The alumni event showed that even years after participating, many Rwandans still appreciate not only the opportunity to network with one another, but to return to an open space for discussion of issues that test the boundaries of the status quo.

Updates about Organizations we have Visited in Rwanda Before:

HOCA – Horizon Community Association, which documents human rights violations against, and fights for the rights of, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered individuals and communities in Rwanda, and builds an LGBT support network – partnered initially with AJPRODHO and then with CAL to apply pressure in Rwanda in the fight against the penal code article 219. HOCA also unveiled a website at www.hoca4rwanda.co.rw

Project Akilah -- Project Akilah (www.projectakilah.org). Founded by GYC Alumni Elizabeth Dearborn Davis (Rwanda Summer '06), Akilah (which is swahili for Wisdom), opened its first school on February 6th, 2010. Congrats Elizabeth and the whole Akilah team! We can't wait to catch up with you in Summer 2010.

RAPP—Rwandans Allied for Peace and Progress has continued the AMAJWI y'UBUZIMA (Voices of Health) Project. These LIVE, regular, village soap opera episodes have been touted as a major reason in the spike in the numbers of people going to hospitals for advice, contraceptives and testing.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Gacaca: Along with several of the Rwandan participants from the human rights workshop, the group had the opportunity to visit a *gacaca* in Gikondo and in Nyamirambo. Much of the case load pertains to issues that have already been raised in previous program reports. Gacaca's are slated to finish in 2010.

Homestays: As always, the international delegates spent several nights in the homes of the families of the workshop participants.

Nyamata Church Memorial: The Learning and Action Community visited and paid respect at several of the memorials visited by previous LACs in Rwanda, including the Kigali Memorial Center and the Catholic Church at Nyamata. For write-ups about these memorials, see previous program reports.

Upcoming LACs in Rwanda:

In Summer 2010, we are holding two Learning and Action Communities in Rwanda, with the second focusing on the particular role that **the arts** play in human rights promotion and protection in Rwanda. Both LACs will aim to achieve continuity with the organizations and issues with which we have been engaging the most in Rwanda to-date, with an aim toward evaluation of efficacy and inspiring our alumni and even others to contribute to the important grassroots efforts in Rwanda.

Participant Biographies

Tyler Branscome (USA), originally from Yorktown, Virginia, is a junior at Wellesley College. She is double majoring in Political Science and Peace and Justice Studies with a concentration in post-conflict transformation. After serving as a delegate in the 2009 Summer Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tyler became passionate in the studies of peacebuilding and youth activism and has since furthered her studies in both topics at her college. Her passion in youth activism roots itself in her previous work as a swim coach for youth ages five to eighteen in her community. By using techniques of mediation, negotiation, and peacebuilding between swimmers, Tyler realized her future work was bound to include children. She hopes to further her studies post-graduation in a masters program in conflict analysis and resolution

Andrea Niehaus received her Bachelor's degree with honors from the University of Iowa in Political Science with two areas of emphasis: International Relations and Developing Areas. After spending time in China teaching English, Andrea returned to the US and pursued a career in non profit. She is

currently the Co-Director of the Iowa United Nations Association, a non profit organization committed to educating and motivating Iowans to support the United Nations. Through her work, Andrea has been able to engage the public on a wide variety of international issues, including human rights.

Nicky Fox (MA gender global studies SUNY Buffalo, BA women's studies, UC Davis) is a PhD student in sociology at Brandeis University. She is interested more broadly in social movements and collective memory, gender and the sociology of religion. More specifically she is interested in the sociology of genocide and how communities who have lived through mass atrocities reconcile with the trauma they have experienced through commemorations and memorials. Her master's thesis was on the intergenerational transmission of trauma from Holocaust survivors to their children and grandchildren. Her current project evaluates the role of religion and faith in the reconciliation process for Rwandan genocide survivors and spiritual leaders.

I loved understanding reconciliation through the eyes of our Rwandan colleagues and how they define and approach human rights. You have to visit a post-genocide country to truly understand the complexity and nuance and politics of reconciliation. Peacebuilding is not the job of outsiders and I am increasingly realizing that.

The effects of genocide will take over a generation to heal but civil society and people on the grassroots level are taking profound steps to move this country forward.

I haven't ever considered myself a serious person, but on this trip I felt like I was kind of serious. I think that is a reflection of my dedication and passion for this work.

Rwanda is so much more than the genocide.

I have seen the Rwandan society by my own eyes and not through macroeconomics or political perspectives. It is a progressive nation. I will be alert in not basing my decisions/judgments on obscure literature.

Carla De Ycaza (MA, Human Rights Studies, Columbia University; BA, Political Science and Classics, Vassar College) is currently an Adjunct Lecturer in Human Rights and Transitional Justice

at New York University's Center for Global Affairs. She is also a doctoral research fellow and PhD candidate in International Human Rights Law at the Irish Centre for Human Rights, studying under the supervision of William Schabas. Her thesis research focuses on traditional and modern methods of post-conflict transitional justice in Africa, focusing on the question of what methods of traditional and modern post-conflict transitional justice are most effective for addressing trauma and memory of victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in Africa. She currently serves as Editor-in-Chief of the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Rights Law*. She is also a Research Consultant at the American Council on Africa, researching and promoting issues of international criminal law, traditional and modern methods of peacebuilding, transitional justice and conflict resolution in Africa.

Carrie O'Neil: Carrie O'Neil is a second year graduate student pursuing her Masters of Public Administration at Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). Concentrating in Human Rights, International Conflict Resolution and Gender Studies, Carrie is interested in the role of historical memory in post-conflict communities and the role that dialogue can play to transform relationships. Carrie is also a Public Management Teaching Assistant and teaches a weekly case-based class on the subject and was Director of a community development non-profit for two years in post-Katrina Mississippi. Her most recent work has been as a facilitator for organizations like Seeds of Peace and Soliya, designing and facilitating coexistence dialogues for participants from the Middle East and South-Central Asia and anti-racism programming for Americans.

Oliver Wyckoff is currently a sophomore at Beloit College, working towards a double major in international relations and psychology. Particularly, he is interested in international aid and development and the psychological aspects of learning. Compassion and service are two key components in Oliver's life; Oliver has practiced Aikido for 8 years, a nonviolent martial art that stresses peace and harmony, served on the Mayor's Youth Council in Seattle during high school, and is presently volunteering at a homeless shelter in Beloit catering to homeless families. Currently, Oliver hopes to become a Foreign Service Officer within the State Department.

Marcel Kaba, a native of Slovakia who in 2009 earned his Bachelor's degree at University of New York in Prague (UNYP) in international economic relations as well as his certificate in peace, conflict and environmental studies, is currently in a Masters program in International Affairs at The New School in New York City. In the Spring, the paper Marcel wrote in UNYP's international law honors seminar was published in *The New Presence: Prague's Journal of International Affairs* (Vol. 12 No. 2 Spring 2009). While at UNYP Marcel worked for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and now in New York he is working as a research assistant at the Graduate Program in International Affairs. Marcel is going to Rwanda to get a feeling of how people deeply affected by gross violence and conflict find ways of forgiving, reconciling and building a common future. He is also looking forward to put his training in peace and conflict studies into practice.

Anuj Gurung. He was born and raised in Kathmandu, Nepal. He finished his undergrad studies from Hiram College, OH majoring in Communication and minoring in Political Science and East Asian History. At the moment, he is a graduate student and a Research Assistant in Conflict Resolution at Georgetown University. His research interests include refugee crisis, post conflict rebuilding, development and communist structures in developing nations. His aspiration is to work for the United Nations eventually (hopefully become the Secretary General). He is inspired by a host of different historic personalities, from the magnanimous Mahatma Gandhi to the revolutionary Ernesto 'Che' Guevara. He has witnessed the poverty of the developing nations as well as the affluence of the West, and strives to work towards creating a bridge between the two.

Samantha Howland is a junior at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester MA, majoring in Political Science with a concentration in Peace and Conflict Studies. In particular, she is passionate about human rights especially the empowerment of women, ways to avoid sexual violence, social justice, and liberation theology. Last summer, she spent 6 weeks in Bosnia teaching an English class, leading a "girl talk" discussion group, and working in an orphanage. Samantha has taught ESL classes for the past two years in the Worcester community and loves teaching. She will spend her spring

semester studying abroad in Lima Peru. She hopes to combine her love for traveling, new cultures, new languages and social justice into a career with a non-profit or non-governmental organization that strives to accomplish the goal of equality for men and women or that works to assist victims of sexual violence, especially in developing countries.

Johonna McCants has ten years of experience developing and coordinating programs that connect arts and media with youth leadership development and community activism. Most recently, she is the founding director of the Visions to Peace Project, a youth leadership and movement-building project based in Washington, D.C. The Visions to Peace Project uses the tools of arts, media, education and organizing to support youth, communities and organizations in building safety and peace through creative community action, rather than reliance on policing, prisons, and punitive policies. Johonna is also the recipient of a 2007 Soros Justice Advocacy Fellowship from the Open Society Institute. She recently completed her PhD in American Studies at the University of Maryland – College Park. Her dissertation examines how Black youth in the U.S. have used hip hop music and community organizing to advance their own critical understandings of violence, while challenging discourses and understandings of violence that criminalize and scapegoat young people. Johonna also holds a Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies and a Certificate in Teaching Excellence from the University of Maryland as well as two Bachelors degrees from the University of Missouri, Columbia – a Bachelor of Journalism in news-editorial journalism and a Bachelor of Arts in interdisciplinary studies. Johonna has been blessed to travel to a number of countries, including a semester at the University of Ghana – Legon during college and three weeks in Nairobi, Kenya in July 2004 as part of a youth leadership, economic justice and peace-building program. Johonna was born in Long Beach, California but has spent most of her life in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Her faith in Christ, cultural identity, and life experiences has profoundly shaped her commitment to personal and social transformation. Johonna is also the proud aunt to one niece and two nephews – Nahdia, age 2, Micah, age 3, and Malachi, age 1. Of all of her various roles and titles, the one she cherishes the most is "Auntie."

Brannon Miller is a native of Carson, MS. He is currently a sophomore at the University of

Mississippi, where he is majoring in Public Policy Leadership. He has been a part of several political campaigns in the state of Mississippi, and is part of a group of students who have been working towards the University's divestment from Israel. After graduation, Brannon hopes to become involved with Mississippi Teacher Corps (MTC), and work for a few years as a teacher in one of the state's critical-need areas, before pursuing a graduate degree in public policy.

Luis Soberon is a third-year at the University of Texas at Austin currently studying Philosophy, Government, and International Studies with a focus on Conflict Resolution. Currently, he is studying the strengths, weaknesses, and potential of international legal institutions in conflict prevention and resolution. He has extensive experience in sales, and state politics through the Texas House of Representatives and the State Democratic Party. He currently aspires to enter law school and study International Law. Beyond academics, he has taught and practiced yoga for 5 years, something that deeply impacts the way he perceives the world.

Samora Covington (BA Psychology and Criminal Justice, Seattle University) is a Clinical Psychology doctoral student at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Concentrating in International Psychology and Human Rights, she is particularly interested in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and reconciliation. Specifically, she is interested in complex (chronic) trauma in victims of genocide and political violence and the impact of systemic oppression on the development of trauma. She has focused on the use of sustained dialogue as a powerful intervention in the healing and reconciliation process. She is also studying the role of religion/spirituality in conflict resolution. Current projects involve the use of intercultural dialogue in addressing trauma, and the incorporation of traditional spiritual healing practices in the treatment of trauma. Lastly, an ever-present concentration is on the identity development and transformation process of violent criminal offenders. She did her undergraduate thesis on former hate crime offenders' passage of change, and is working to gain experience in implementing restorative justice and mediation practices in the course of community reintegration and development.

Alisha Mehta, an international student from Mumbai, India, is a junior at Grinnell College. She

is an Independent Major in International Relations and Global Development but is also extremely interested in film and photography. She believes that the media is a very powerful tool and if used effectively is one of the best ways to create awareness and make change. She hopes to somehow combine these two passions in her future academic pursuits. In addition, Alisha is also an avid mountaineer and took a year off before going to college to train for and climb Mt. Everest and has also been a part of and led various other expeditions in the Himalayas in India. With an interest in film and a passion for subject areas such as international law, human rights, global development, political science and history, she does not know where she intends to be in the future but for the moment is thoroughly enjoying her explorations.

Khaled Fayyad is a third year student at the University of Texas at Austin. He is currently studying Political Science and Philosophy, with a concentration in international relations. He is a Palestinian who was raised in Jerusalem until the age of 18, after which he began attending university in the United States. Khaled is passionate about human rights issues as they pertain to health, education and land reform. Children's rights and needs are a specific topic of interest and importance to him as he hopes to promote advocacy for those who are inadequately represented in their respective governments. He hopes to work with the Rwandese in order to explore universal and domestic human rights issues that he deeply cares for and wants to see solved.

Germaine UWABAREZE, was born in Rwanda, Kigali. She has finished her secondary studies from the School of Sciences of Byimana in Biology and Chemistry. She is now a second year in Physiotherapy student at Kigali Health Institute. At University, she is acting social affairs dealing with conflicts resolutions among students and also physiotherapy department representative.

By the end of 2008, she has been selected as a brilliant student who got orphans of Rwandan scholarship to continue her studies at University, from this, with other six friends in November, 2009. They started Orphans of Rwanda Inc, Business Club. She is acting social events and memberships within the groups. After her graduation, Germaine has a dream to become a good future leader, a leader who promote and protect human rights and empowers women as well.

NINSIMA Caleb, a native of Rwanda, who in 2009 obtained his bachelor's degree in law school at the National of Rwanda based in the Southern province. He worked in the University legal Clinical aid in 2007 while as a student, listening to People's grievances and provide legal advice and draft a conclusion thereof if need be. He did his research paper in the field of international Criminal justice on the topic entitled "Legal Challenges associated with ICTR'S completion/exit strategy" and spent two months in Arusha, Unite Republic of Tanzania, working on that paper. He also underwent internship from National Public Prosecution service (NPPA) as a internee, he was trained on how to prepare indictments. Currently he works as a legal adviser at FACT and among the responsibilities is to provide legal advice and assistance to the victims of gender based violence (GBV).

Theophile NAMAHORO is a Rwandan by nationality and currently a student of School of Finance and Banking pursuing bachelors's degree in Business administration with special focus on the Accounting. He is in the third year and will be going for an internship in a project called Indego Africa which helps women cooperatives to deliver their hand craft products. He is interested in helping people who are victims of violence.

Maombi Angelic, a native of Rwanda and a student in secondary school. Currently volunteering in CIMS (Center for Information and social mobilization), she just joined CIMS and is learning a lot of things. She feels that, this summer will help her to learn new skills and change conditions of living of vulnerable people. She also expects to learn more about human rights through sharing experiences. Her hobbies are praying, singing, making friends, reading novels and traveling.

MBANJUMUCYO Gabin was born in Rwanda but grew and took my primary and secondary education in Kenya. He is now a 5th year Medical student at the National University of Rwanda, and is now involved in conflict management, gender empowerment and anti- AIDS campaign projects in MEDSAR (Medical Student Association of Rwanda. He hopes to improve human rights to patients during his career. After his undergraduate graduation, he hopes to specialize in surgery.

RWIBASIRA Jean Claude is a native of Rwanda and in 2008 earned a Bachelor's degree in Law at

the National University of Rwanda. After, he served as a volunteer, especially for indigent populations and vulnerable groups in broad sense. In 2009 (February), he shared his idea with some of his colleagues and they decided to found a Non-Governmental Organization which provides legal services, free of charge, to indigent populations and vulnerable group. It is now in existence. It is called "INARA LEGAL AID SERVICE", and Jean Claude is actually the founder member and the legal representative. The organization has a mission of contributing to the building of a state based on the rule of law and promoting equal access to justice.

KYAGABO Vicent

Was born in Uganda but a Rwandan by nationality. I completed advanced level of education in human science in the year 2008. In 2005 earned Uganda ordinary Certificate of education. After completing advanced level, attended the solidarity camp in Ruhengeri in Northern Province of Rwanda where I earned Certificate in Unity and Reconciliation studies. I also worked as a freelance in the newspaper company in Rwanda called The New Times. Currently, I am a volunteer working in Uyisenga N'Imanzi and living in Niboye Peace Village with genocide survivors. I wish to continue with my studies next year in the faculty of social sciences at the National University of Rwanda.

NIYOMUGABO Ildephonse. Is a Rwandan by nationality born in Ruhango district in the southern province and student in Catholic University of Kabgayi, I received a diploma in the faculty of Development Studies. I am currently working with COPORWA (Potter's community of Rwanda) in the department of Human right and development as Assistant. I received different trainings at national and regional levels. I also participated in different conferences that addressed the problems of indigenous people in the region. My first language is French, so I try or begin to use English language because I understand it.

MUHOZA MUTONI Alice was born in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where I studied my primary school. I came in Rwanda after the genocide against the Tutsis where I studied my secondary school and University studies. I have a bachelor's degree in law from Kigali Independent University in 2006. I work for AJPRODHO-JIJUKIRWA as project Coordinator in the western Province, Karongi district, since 2008 up to now. My hobbies are praying and swimming but I don't

know how to swim very well, I wish if I find someone to teach me. I am expecting to learn more from U.S experience in Human rights, particularly in the criminal justice sector.

Aisha UMUKOBWA. She was born and raised in Rwanda. She is a student at the National University of Rwanda 3rd year journalism and communication. Aisha is also a Journalist at Radio Salus [Butare]. By working in Journalism skills, Aisha is interested in Radio and T.V Production. At the moment, She is producing documentary movies about Muslim students association 2009 [focus; social life with non Muslim She hopes to further her studies in Masters Program in conflict analysis and resolution.

Ernest DUKUZE: Native of Rwanda, possessing a bachelor's degree in Degree in Clinical Psychology from the National University of Rwanda. Currently serving as a Human rights Education and rehabilitation of victims) Project Manager in a national Health and Human rights NGOs called FACT. My work orientation at FACT focuses on planning, managing and supervise all the project activities related to Human rights promotion, gender sensitiveness and rehabilitation of victims of violence and torture. Trained in Human rights defender at regional level, coordinated the task force of the civil society monitoring on international treaties implementation in Rwanda. I am now in a pilot committee preparing the civil society position Paper on UPR (Universal Periodic Review) in Rwanda for 10th session in February 2011.

UMURERWA Emerance (Queen). She is a native of Rwanda, a law graduate from the National University of Rwanda. She is passionate for fair justice and human rights promotion. In 2003, she participated human rights competition that was organized by CLADHO where I presented a poem about child rights focusing on street children and awarded. I have participated in different Humanitarian and human rights International Moot Courts. My future aspirations is to work with NGO in the field of protection of women and Children.

Pascal (Pasi) Ruberwa

Pasi is a musician/rapper. He is also a research assistant for Population Services International, and attends the Kigali Institute of Management, where he initiated a Never Again club. Pasi worked on previous Global Youth Connect delegations to Rwanda and this time was able to be a participant.

What did you learn about Human Rights:

You have to keep fighting for it, you can never give up.

We should really be asking people [whose rights have been violated] what the term means to them and what it is that they need.

How you promote HR makes all the difference. Informing in a respectful and peaceful manner (friendly too) can produce results. Keeping your emotions in check is very important.

Human Rights is the strongest argument/language and framework for pushing for all rights that are encompassed within it – i.e. civil and political, cultural and economic... I am excited about incorporating human rights education into the work that I do.

I learned that I can easily get to know people and am comfortable interacting with people from very different backgrounds. I also learned that I need to be more patient when having debates on issues that I am passionate about.

STAFF:

MUDAKIKWA John

AJPRODHO Executive Director

John is a graduate of the National University of Butare with a degree in Law. With AJPRODHO, he has been Chair of the Steering Committee of the Legal Aid Forum, and published numerous policy papers, most recently on incarcerated children's rights.

Jesse Hawkes

GYC Executive Director, Rwanda Prg. Director

Jesse is a social activist, professional actor, theatre director, author, and youth development worker. In addition to serving as GYC's Program Director for Rwanda since January 2007, and taking on the role of Executive Director in September 2009. Jesse's other work in Rwanda has included developing and managing a creative HIV prevention program for over sixty Rwandan high schools and communities, utilizing a combination of innovative theatre methods, peer education, and outreach activities. Jesse graduated *cum laude* from Harvard University in 1999 with a bachelor's degree in history.

Eric Brinkert

GYC Special Program Assistant

Eric was a GYC Delegate to Rwanda in Winter 2008. He graduated from Claremont McKenna College, majoring in government with an international relations focus, and subsequently received his Masters of Arts in conflict resolution from Georgetown University. While at Claremont, 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. Eric currently works on conflict resolution related to race relations in Richmond, Virginia.

Godfrey Gakwandi

AJPRODHO

Godfrey is a Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building Project Manager at World Vision International in Kigali, Rwanda. He is also a member of AJPRODHO's administrative council and decided to help assist with logistics on the Winter 2010 delegation so as to better familiarize himself with the work that AJPRODHO and GYC are doing together in Rwanda. At the time of publishing, Godfrey had been elected to the position of President at AJPRODHO.