



## Human Rights Delegation to COLOMBIA

With the aim of educating our delegates on the current human rights climate in Colombia, GYC engages with government officials, academics, experts, and activists.

### Bogotá

Our visits to government offices in the capital city provided the theoretical frameworks and political background necessary for understanding the policies, and their implications, surrounding the on-going conflict.

### Cartagena

Time spent on the coast, in and around the city Cartagena, as well as in the state of Bolívar, allowed delegates to both see and feel the effects of the conflict, as well as to spend time in communities rebuilding in the aftermath of the violence.



Delegates Laura, Maoqing, and Anna pictured in Plaza Simón Bolívar, in front of the National Cathedral

*“This delegation has complicated my understanding of human rights because I was able to see what this esoteric ideas look like in real life. Human rights are much more complicated, complex, and multifaceted in real life than in the pages of a book.” – GYC Delegate*



*"It is the people there that impress me the most. They carry so much pain from the past, some of them are still under threat now, but they are still so positive and so passionate about their life and future!"*

- GYC Delegate



Current and past GYC delegates with Fundación Escuela Nueva students in the resettled community of Patio Grande, Bolívar

## Schedule of Meetings & Site Visits

With the goal of giving delegates a comprehensive perspective of the past and contemporary issues at hand in the Colombian conflict, GYC's program met with or visited the following experts, offices, and communities during our two weeks in country:

### Bogotá

- Presidential Office for Human Rights
- Office of the High Commissioner for Peace
- Center for Memory, Peace & Reconciliation
- Victims Bogotá, Mayoral Office
- Office of Colombian Youth
- Presidential Palace tour
- Indigenous affairs expert presentation
- Human rights policy expert presentation
- Bogotá Graffiti tour

### Cartagena and Bolívar Department

- Communications Collective of Montes de María
- Patio Grande (relocated community) with Familias en su tierra
- League of Displaced Women
- Colombian Agency for Reintegration
- Isla de León (informal settlement) with TECHO Cartagena
- San Basilio de Palenque (Afro community) with Tierra Grata
- Afrocaribe Foundation
- I.E. Bertha Gedeón public school
- Fundación Juan Felipe Gómez Escobar
- Mental health expert presentation



GYC Colombia Delegates visiting the informal settlement of Isla de León, outside Cartagena with TECHO, where some 70% of the inhabitants are internally displaced persons.

## Guiding Questions & Conclusions

### Connecting to the past:

To what extent does Colombia's history manifest in the contemporary context?

### Examining the present:

To what extent has there been an attempt to respond to the violation of human rights?

### Looking toward the future:

What elements are necessary for building a peaceful Colombia and why?

## Issue Spotlight: Internal Displacement

Given that Colombia is now home to the largest IDP population on the planet, it is impossible to consider the issues related to the conflict without giving time to this issue. Figures of the affected population range from 6 to 7 million people, but it is undeniable that women and children have suffered disproportionately. While these issues echoed throughout our visits to government offices like Victims Bogotá, organizations such as The League of Displaced Women, and in the stories we heard from the relocated residents of Patio Grande, the visit to Isla de León was for the delegates ultimately the most immediate and real manifestation of internal displacement that they witnessed.

*“Visiting Isla de León was the most memorable because it provided a very difficult lens through which to see the armed conflict in Colombia. It was a very necessary site visit because being in contact with a displaced community and seeing how they live was important for shaping our thoughts on the subject.”*

– GYC Delegate

“This is how we go”

Combining tears and smiles on the path to making our dreams come true.

Graffiti in Cartagena



*“...hearing what peace meant to them really resonated with me. Their personal experience with war means they have an unique perspective on peace; to them, the basis of peace was education.”*

– GYC Delegate, on the visit to relocated settlement, Patio Grande in Bolívar



GYC Delegates meeting with The League of Displaced Women in Turbaco, Bolívar to learn about sexual violence, community building, and resilience.

## Advocacy in Action: GYC Colombia's work moving forward

Both current and past delegates from our Colombia program have been invited to work in collaboration with the community of Patio Grande and The League of Displaced Women on two significant initiatives. Work has already commenced on the needs assessment for Patio Grande, a document that will be used as community leaders advocate for their rights to education, housing, and life. With the women's league, delegates and the program director are supporting them in their work to develop a peace education curriculum centered on historical memory.



Street art in Bogotá

*"After this delegation, I have much deeper understanding about human rights in real life, rather than just the definition on paper."* – GYC Delegate

*"This delegation has made me so much more curious about Colombia. It was incredibly important for me to learn about a country that I have come to love!"* – GYC Delegate

*"This delegation gave me much deeper understanding about human rights from a variety of different levels and perspectives... it showed me the successes and lessons in the field of human rights."* – GYC Delegate