THE GLOBAL YOUTH CONNECT DELEGATION TO COLOMBIA OFFERED INSIGHT INTO THE COMPLEX HUMAN RIGHTS CONTEXT, AS IT NAVIGATES THE HISTORIC PEACE ACCORDS WITH THE FARC AFTER MORE THAN 52 YEARS OF ARMED CONFLICT.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- HOW CAN WE DISCUSS THE HISTORY OF CONFLICT AND NARRATIVES OF VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA?
- WHAT ARE CHALLENGES FACED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE PROCESS?
- HOW DOES COLOMBIA’S PEACE PROCESS COMPARE WITH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PEACE BUILDING EFFORTS?
- WHAT INFORMATION CAN BE TAKEN FROM HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS AND EFFORTS IN COLOMBIA?

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SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

BOGOTA
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE
UN VERIFICATION MISSION
INTERCELESTIAL COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE
AFRODES - ASSOCIATION FOR DISPLACED AFRO-COLOMBIANS
DEFENSORÍA DEL PUEBLO - STATE OMBUDSMAN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
GRAFFITI WALKING TOUR & SIGHTSEEING

SANTANDER DE QUILICHAO
ACIN - INDIGENOUS COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN CAUCA

CALI
REGIONAL CONTEXTUALISATION AT TERTULIA MUSEUM
SANTAMARÍA FOUNDATION - TRANS RIGHTS ORGANIZATION
CASA NARANJA - COMMUNITY THEATRE & ARTS PROJECT
BIBLIOhUETO & HAKUNA MATATA - PETECUY COMMUNITY LITERACY AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS
SALSA CLASSES & VISIT TO SALSA BAR
JANUARY 3RD


-GYC DELEGATE, RACHEL MITCHELL, A SENIOR AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

JANUARY 4TH

MEETING WITH THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE (OACP)

"REFLECTING BACK ON ALL THE VISITS, I'M HAPPY WE WERE ABLE TO COME HERE FIRST. THE POWERPOINT AND BOOKLETS ON THE ACCORDS WERE VERY HELPFUL AS VISUAL RESOURCES. DUE TO THE FACT THAT THIS PRESENTATION WAS AN OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE, I WAS A BIT SKEPTICAL GOING IN THAT WE WOULD BE FED AN ASSORTMENT OF ONE SIDED TRUTHS AND PROPAGANDA. ALTHOUGH BIAS WAS EVIDENT, OVERALL I FELT WE WERE GIVEN AN IN DEPTH AND CANDID DESCRIPTION OF THE GOVERNMENT’S EFFORTS TO RESTORE JUSTICE AND SECURITY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY WITH A CLEAR OUTLINE OF THE PEACE ACCORDS AND THEIR PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION."

-GYC DELEGATE, JILL CEFALO, AN INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS POSTGRADUATE AT LESLEY UNIVERSITY

JANUARY 5TH

UN VERIFICATION MISSION & INTERCELSIAL COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

"THE MEETING ALLOWED THE DELEGATION TO SEE AND UNDERSTAND THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE COLOMBIAN PEACE PROCESS. WHILE THEY ARE NOT DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT, THEIR WORK IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP ALL ACTORS ACCOUNTABLE, ESPECIALLY THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT AND FARC. THE INTERCELSIAL COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE WAS THE FIRST NGO THE DELEGATION MET WITH. THEIR ROLE IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE A DIRECT CONNECTION TO PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE CONFLICT AND TO HOLD THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE."

-GYC DELEGATE, MICHELLE PEA, A CONFLICT RESOLUTION POSTGRADUATE AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
SNAPSHOTS FROM DELEGATION

JANUARY 6TH & 7TH

GRAFFITI WALKING TOUR AND BOGOTÁ SIGHTSEEING

"The tour took us around downtown Bogotá and the guide explained important pieces of street art, neighborhood history, and various different types of conflict within the country. A very interesting artist's initiative sought to address homelessness in Bogotá so the artist would stencil the faces of homeless people in the areas that they sleep in. Additionally, much of the street art had indigenous aspects or made political statements regarding subjects such as war, capitalism, greed, drug trade, and corruption. It took away a lot of Colombian history from the tour, but I also found a renewed hope."

-YOC DELEGATE, RACHEL MITCHELL

JANUARY 8TH

AFRODES - ASSOCIATION FOR DISPLACED AFRO-COLUMBIANS

"The session with Afrodes enabled delegates to better understand challenges faced by displaced Afro-Colombians and the human rights violations committed against the underrepresented group. Interestingly, the speakers shared a few optimistic developments, including the organization's work with other minority groups, collaboration with international organizations, and the United States Congressional Black Caucus. Also, that an Afrodes member is currently running for Colombian congress. This meeting demonstrated that despite unfair and unjust circumstances, marginalized groups such as Afrodes will continue to fight for equal rights."

-YOC DELEGATE, ALLISON BA STELLI, CONFLICT RESOLUTION POSTGRADUATE AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

JANUARY 9TH

DEFENSORÍA DEL PUEBLO - COLOMBIAN STATE OMBUDSMAN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

"The three Defensoría del Pueblo meetings provided the delegation with unique explanations of each office's current programs. All speakers, which included biologists, psychologists, and those well-versed in policy, were highly educated and dedicated to the agency's mission. I was interested to learn that this government agency serves as a consultant and informant to policy makers, therefore leaving the agency's recommendations non-binding."

-YOC DELEGATE, ALLISON BA STELLI
SNAPSHOTS FROM DELEGATION

JANUARY 12TH

ACIN - INDIGENOUS COUNCIL IN SANTANDER DE QUILICHAO
"WE TRAVELED TO SANTANDER DE QUILICHAO TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW THE CONFLICT HAS AFFECTED COLOMBIA'S INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES. IN THE MEETING WITH THE INDIGENOUS COUNCIL, WE LEARNED THE DEVASTATING REALITIES THESE GROUPS HAVE FACED THROUGHOUT CONFLICT. SADLY, THE ACTS OF VIOLENCE FACED BY THESE GROUPS HAVE NOT ENDED WITH THE SIGNING OF THE PEACE DEAL. SPEAKERS SHARED THAT THE POWER VACUUM LEFT BY THE FARC HAS PAVED THE WAY FOR EQUALLY VIOLENT PARAMILITARY GROUPS AND THE ELN GUERRILLA GROUP TO ESTABLISH A STRONG PRESENCE. LIKE OTHER MINORITY GROUPS, THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY IS SUBJECTED TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT, INEQUALITY AND UNDERREPRESENTATION, AND CULTURAL EROSION, BUT ALSO SUFFERS FROM DIRECT VIOLENCE SUCH AS LAND MINES, GUNFIRE, AND OTHER THREATS."
-BCG DELEGATE, ALLISON RASTELLI

JANUARY 13TH

CASA NARANJA & BIBLIOGUETTO / HAKUNA MATATA
"I FOUND IT MOST APPROPRIATE THAT OUR LAST TWO OFFICIAL MEETINGS WERE WITH EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. CASA NARANJA PROVIDES FREE THEATER AND DANCE CLASSES TO CHILDREN IN A BARRIO IN CALL AND BIBLIOGUETTO WORKS TO PROMOTE PEACE AND LITERACY IN A PREVIOUSLY GANG AND DRUG CONTROLLED BARRIO, CALLED "PETECUY". AN INTERESTING COMMONALITY BETWEEN ALL OF OUR VISITS WAS THE EMPHASIS ON ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION ON BOTH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS, AS WELL AS CLEARLY COMMUNICATING HOW COLOMBIA IS MOST DEFINITELY NOT POST-CONFLICT, BUT SIMPLY POST-AGREEMENT. CONVEYING THIS MESSAGE ABROAD IS SO IMPORTANT BECAUSE ALTHOUGH PAPERS HAVE BEEN SIGNED AND THE FARC HAVE BEEN DISARMED, THE CONFLICT IS STILL VERY MUCH ALIVE AND THE ORDINARY CITIZENS OF COLOMBIA ARE BEARING THE BRUNT OF IT. MOVING FORWARD WE MUST LOOK NOT ONLY TO HELP AND HEAL THE VICTIMS AND VICTIMIZERS OF THE CONFLICT, BUT ALSO TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE VICTIMS OF CIRCUMSTANCE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. DESPITE CONTINUED NEGLECT AND OSTRACIZATION, THEIR OPTIMISM AND PERSEVERANCE SHOULD BE AN EXAMPLE FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD TO FOLLOW."
-BCG DELEGATE, JILL CEFALO
“The 2018 GYC Colombia delegation not only taught me about government and NGO groups promoting human rights in Colombia, but also provided a complete understanding of the many narratives throughout conflict and in the post-peace deal era. Additionally, I learned about the involvement of international groups and their collaboration with Colombian organizations. Further, I feel that after this program I am able to discuss and analyze human rights initiatives and challenges related to the implementation of the peace deal.”

- Allison Rastelli
Bibliohuettu & Hakuna Matata - Petecuy Community Literacy and Arts Organizations
Gustavo Gutiérrez
Eider Felipe Bedoya
Sandra García
Ricardo Salazar Marulanda
Sandra Cusis
Ángeles Carmona
Jorge Valencia
Mario Fernando Urriago
Richard Marino
Ricardo León Muñoz
Heidy Torres
Felipe Ortega
Camilo Torres
Camilo Garay
Michel Ramírez
Zeidy Riveros
Steven Escobar
Jhon Freddy Otalvaro

AFRODES - Association for Displaced Afrocolombians
Luz Marina Becerra Panesso

Defensoría del Pueblo - State Ombudsman for Human Rights

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