

Global Youth Connect

Rwanda Program Report

Human Rights Delegation for Young Leaders

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Universal Declaration of Human Rights

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards each other in a spirit of brotherhood.

Abantu bose bavuka bakwiye agaciro no kwubahwa kimwe.
Bose bavukana ubwenge n'Umutima, bagomba kugilirana kivandimwe.

(Article 1)



Global Youth Connect

Acting together for compassion, human rights and responsibilities

Global Youth Connect was founded by a group of young leaders who came together at a conference on genocide prevention in 1997. They discussed a fundamental issue of concern to all of us:

Why does mass violence happen and what can we as individuals and organizations do to help prevent it from happening in the first place?

Inspired to do something about the problem of genocide, many ideas for action were discussed by GYC's founders. Forefront in their minds was the need for youth to learn from past mistakes and choose a different future, a future based on the fundamental respect for human rights regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality and gender.

Global Youth Connect was created as a direct response to the need to do more to educate and motivate youth around the world to act in ways that will prevent conflict and promote the human rights of all.

The Rwandan genocide was definitely on the mind of the founders of Global Youth Connect. Three years before they met for the first time, the country was torn apart by fighting and 1 million Tutsis and politically moderate Hutus died. Almost as improbable, the international community failed to meet their obligation under the Genocide Convention to help stop the genocide.

Today, GYC is bringing together young leaders from the U.S. and Rwanda to explore the roots of the 1994 genocide and how Rwandans are coping now. We are working to understand the factors that make violence possible and gaining knowledge that we can apply to current conflicts and conflicts in development. In particular, we are interested in finding answers to these and other pressing questions of our generation:

- What can the experience of Rwanda tell us about what we should be doing to stop genocide in Darfur and bring a peaceful end

to violence in the Middle East and other conflict zones?

- What actions need to be taken today to ensure that a similar violence as seen twelve years ago does not resurface in Rwanda?
- How do a wide-ranging and interconnected set of human rights violations – from lack of educational opportunities to the inability to speak one’s opinion freely – provide the sparks for violence on a large scale?
- What are the long-lasting effects of genocide on a society, particularly on the next generation?
- What needs to happen today -- in Rwanda, our own neighborhoods and in the world in general -- to fulfill the promise of “never again”?
- What can we, as young leaders, do to make a difference?
- How can youth work together without regard to the arbitrary borders of nation-states to address shared human concerns?

A new generation of Rwandans is now growing up trying to understand what happened to their country and what they can do to build a more peaceful future. Inspiring young leaders are actively working to realize a new vision of Rwanda. They see Rwanda as a place where the deep wounds of genocide need to be healed. For them, Rwandans of all backgrounds must regain trust, ensure justice and be free to speak their opinions without fear of retribution. Most importantly, Rwandan youth aspire to a future that holds the basic respect for fundamental human rights at its center.

GYC supports young Rwandans and local grassroots organizations that are actively working to make a difference in their communities. We know that their efforts to take a stand on human rights issues – not just on political concerns, but on basic rights like education, health and poverty alleviation -- are the difference that Rwanda needs in order to create peaceful alternatives for the future.

On the other side of the world, there is a growing group of young Americans who are deeply

concerned with the problem of genocide. This profound interest in human rights, social justice, economic development, and the gap between the “developed” and the “developing” world have them asking questions which are right at the heart of Global Youth Connect’s mission.

Why Rwanda?

“I want to see, first hand, the impact of the world’s failure to live up to its moral obligations for humanitarian intervention in Rwanda. I hope that such an experience can help me better formulate a personal agenda for my future as an international human rights lawyer.”

--John Connelley

“New, useful, and real ideas are created and exchanged from personal, hands-on experience. I have done my book-work, but in order for me to truly be a defender of human rights, the experience of cross-cultural exchange and going to Rwanda, where the process of its rebuilding has only begun, is imperative to my understanding and long-term effectiveness. It is easy to give up on ideas but it is not easy to give up on people. It is not easy to give up after having personal experiences.”

--Jessica DeMulder

“I want to understand their lives and know what Rwandan youth felt and continue to feel about their situation and the condition of their country. Furthermore, I want them to see me there as a fellow young person who has traveled there to hear their stories and learn from them. The first steps to peace are listening and understanding from all sides.”

--Naomi Sully

“I have felt helpless, as I usually learn about many of these modern day tragedies so many years afterwards. Now I have the opportunity to do something. I can directly be a part of the positive change that I and many other African descendents so desperately want for Africa.”

--Christina Tilghman

“Ever since I was young, I heard stories about Rwanda from my grandparents who were forced to leave the country because they were supposedly Tutsi sympathizers. I have always wanted to visit and learn from the Rwandans themselves why this conflict ended in such horror and how further atrocities can be prevented.”

--Zaid Jivani

For four weeks a group of 14 young leaders from the U.S. traveled to Rwanda to participate in a human rights delegation. The program was organized by Global Youth Connect in partnership with Never Again-Rwanda, a local organization working to educate young Rwandans about the genocide and ways to prevent future genocides. GYC is inspired by the work they are doing in secondary schools from Gisenyi to Kigali and we appreciate the opportunity to work in collaboration with them on this project. Such partnerships are crucial and our success in getting this challenging project off the ground could not have been possible without their moral support, advice and friendship.

Participants reflected on Rwanda's violent past while working to understand what is happening in the country today. They were challenged to figure out what Rwanda had to tell them about themselves and how they can be better at being pro-active in making a difference in the world. They drew their inspiration from people they met on the streets and the many places they visited. Our Rwandan friends and the organizations we worked with encouraged us along the way. And through our interactions, fieldwork and friendships, we assisted the work of Rwandans and local organizations. We found courage to not give up hope and to continue to fighting for human rights despite the challenges and obstacles we must overcome to achieve our hopes for the future.

This program report provides a broad overview of the activities of this delegation as well as a summary of some of the information we learned and actions we hope to keep taking to be part of the efforts to strengthen the future of Rwandan youth through investing in human rights today. It also presents our plans for action and some ideas on how others can get involved.

Uyisenga N'Manzi *Supporting Genocide Orphans*

One of the continuing challenges that Rwandans face as they rebuild their country in the wake of the 1994 genocide is caring for the disproportionate number of children and youth who were orphaned during the violence.

Hundreds of thousands are growing up without the nurture and support of their families. These genocide orphans face monumental daily challenges. They go hungry because they cannot

afford to buy food. Others are homeless and living on the streets. Many are haunted by the trauma of having lost everything and having seen more violence than any child or human being should ever have to witness. Some were raped during the genocide and now have children of their own.

After a deeply moving and thought-provoking visit to the Gisozi genocide memorial in Kigali, GYC visited with Uyisenga N'Manzi, an organization which is working to provide genocide and HIV/AIDS orphans with their basic needs, such as housing and food, as well as psychological and emotional support. At the same time, they are working with an eye to long-term development, helping orphans get to school and developing programs that will enable them to rise above the limitations of poverty.



One of 20 homes constructed in Uyisenga N'Manzi's Peace Village for orphans of the genocide and HIV/AIDS

To address one of the biggest challenges that most orphans face – having a place to live -- Uyisenga N'Manzi has established a Peace Village. In this village, orphans ranging from the age of 5 to 26 live together in 20 homes. Each household is managed by the oldest child. In addition to providing shelter to the orphans they serve, Uyisenga N'Manzi also pays for the children's school fees and sponsors vocational training.

Uyisenga N'Manzi's dedicated staff provides a holistic range of services to address the multi-faceted needs of Rwanda's orphans, yet they also know that for every one orphan that they are able to serve, many more remain unreached by their care. As a result, they have ambitious plans to expand their programs to reach orphans in other areas of Rwanda as well.

Supporting the Work of Uyisenga N'Manzi

One of GYC's goals is to find creative ways of supporting the work of local organizations that are already working to promote and protect the rights of children and youth in our program countries. Here are some of the ways in which we've worked to support Uyisenga N'Manzi over the past year:

Volunteers: To date, GYC has provided Uyisenga N'Manzi with the support of 6 volunteers working on short-term projects. These volunteers have worked on projects such as: developing a new website for the organization, conducting interviews with orphans, and teaching on topics as diverse as computer skills, English as a third language and rap and hip-hop music.



Visit to the Peace Village

Youth Exchange: By visiting the Peace Village and organizing interactions, GYC helps support Uyisenga N'Manzi's efforts to boost the morale of the young people they work with while exposing delegation members first-hand to the issues and challenges that genocide orphans face. Such exchanges are usually brief but, as a result GYC and participants in the delegation can act as advocates on their behalf.

Educational Curriculum: One GYC delegation member, Tiffany Shumate, was so inspired by the work of Uyisenga N'Manzi that she is designing an educational workshop on the issue of child-headed households in post-genocide Rwanda. This workshop will be used by GYC in our U.S.-based educational programs for high school students. The workshop will not only raise awareness about the

issue but will also challenge students to get more involved, perhaps by inspiring them to raise money to help fund the building of a new house in the Peace Village or connecting young people in Rwanda and the U.S. via a pen pal exchange.

Funding: As part of our new small grants fund, GYC awarded Uyisenga N'Manzi \$1,000 in support of their work with genocide orphans. Specifically, this money will be used to help set up the households for the newest 10 houses that they have built. \$100 for each household will help them buy the essential supplies and equipment they will need to start their new lives at the Peace Village.

Learning Community Human Rights Advocacy

Learning communities, or interactive human rights workshops, are an important part of each of GYC's delegation programs. Our recent workshop in Rwanda created a cross-cultural community among fourteen participants from the U.S. and fourteen Rwandan youth leaders. For four days, participants, shared their stories and ideas, learning from each other about how they could work together to advocate for human rights.



Small group discussion at the Learning Community

The main goal of this workshop was for participants to learn about human rights advocacy by actually designing a campaign to implement after the workshop. They were challenged to identify an important human rights issue facing Rwandan youth and identify strategies to affect change on the issue that they could work on together. They started with

a broad discussion on their ideas of “human rights” and “advocacy”. Then, they discussed and analyzed the priority human rights issues affecting Rwandan youth, selecting one for further consideration. Then they debated potential strategies for creating change on that issue while assessing the group’s ability to implement different strategies. Finally, they designed an advocacy campaign that they could all play a part in implementing.

Through small and large group discussions and activities, we developed relationships, shared ideas and found common ground. Throughout the four days of the workshop, the participants analyzed not only the root causes of human rights problems affecting Rwandan youth but brainstormed potential strategies for action. Yet, our biggest challenge was learning how to solve disagreements within the group about the best way to make decisions about what we wanted to do. Increasingly, we began to debate and question whether our decision-making process was taking us in the right direction. We would decide on what we wanted to do and then take several steps back to question whether our decision was right or best.



Some of the key questions we debated in our decision-making included:

- Did we want majority-rule democracy or 100% consensus?
- Was the problem we chose - illiteracy - really the biggest, most important problem?
- Was the problem too big, too difficult to solve?
- Is illiteracy a “human rights issue”?

- How had illiteracy contributed to the violence experienced by Rwandan during the genocide?
- Did we have the time, resources and capability to implement our plan of action?

And on top of this, the group often encountered language barriers, cultural differences and strong opinions. Increasingly, we all became frustrated when the process wasn’t working the way we wanted it to or when we felt stuck in our decision-making. At times we wondered if we were going to accomplish anything by the end of our time together.

But despite the challenges we faced, we kept pursuing our goal and pushed through the uncertainty. We ultimately came together when we realized that we all share common ideas than not. We modified our individual and collective ideas. We made compromises and began to trust in our decision-making process. We recognized that the main issue was making a difference in the lives of Rwandans. We all wanted to use our skills and resources to do something to address the issues we were discussing. We were inspired by each other and wanted to work together. We found that we were able to bring all of our ideas together and develop an advocacy campaign that, if successful, we think will accomplish a lot to address the challenge of illiteracy in Rwanda. And by helping to decrease the illiteracy rate we believe that we can have an impact on individual lives, making it easier to address the next layer of human rights challenges.

In the end, we realized that even people who share common dreams of promoting human rights need to learn how to work together and overcome differences.



Summary of Major Workshop Themes

Human rights is a useful framework to use to create change on important problems.

Human rights are both universal and culturally applied.

Advocacy is matching the goal of promoting/protecting human rights with specific actions to achieve the desired change.

There are many ideas about ways to advocate and different methods of making decisions.

Individuals and organizations working together can maximize impact/change on a specific issue.

In deciding the actions to take, cultural issues/challenges become more relevant and important.

Despite cultural differences, it is important to try to resolve problems in a global context.

Rwandans and U.S. participants both have a lot to offer in terms of: experience, ideas, resources, skills, and action.

Collaboration is powerful but very challenging.

Results will not be created immediately; it will take hard work, communication, understanding, patience, faith, action & evaluation of progress.

A plan is just a plan, not the action itself – follow-through is essential.



Group photo of Learning Community participants

Joint Campaign to Promote Literacy in Rwanda

We want to improve the lives of Rwandan youth through alleviating the problem of illiteracy. We will accomplish this by:

- Supporting existing Rwandan organizations, initiatives and individuals working on the problem;
- Developing new collaborative projects;
- Coordinating our efforts to maximize impact on the issue; and
- Attracting/finding more resources to address the problem of illiteracy.

Specifically, we will support the work of Fight Illiteracy Youth Organization (FIYO), led by workshop participant Moses Gahigi. We will do this by creating and strengthening programs to train teachers, helping educate others through a radio program, developing a picture book and filming a short documentary. Through collective fundraising efforts in the U.S. using the documentary and our personal experiences, we will help fund the collaborative implementation of these projects under the leadership of FIYO and with input and involvement from all workshop participants.

We have already started working on the first steps in our campaign. A team of GYC volunteers – Laura Heaton, Heidi Smith, and Alyson Martin – conducted extensive site visits and interviews to create the documentary. Editing is currently underway and we look forward to using the film as a tool for helping to support new and existing illiteracy programming in Rwanda.

Maraba Coffee

One Path to Economic Development

Most Americans grab their steaming cup of coffee in the morning without giving any thought to where that coffee came from, let alone how that cup of coffee is supporting the livelihoods of communities far away. Yet, for many countries, the cultivation and production of coffee can play a key role in economic development and poverty alleviation.

According to the American Specialty Coffee Association, Rwandan coffee is the best in the world; selling at \$54 per kilo, it is also the most expensive in the world. But what makes Rwandan coffee taste so good? Is coffee cultivation truly benefiting the farmers and communities where it is grown? Will reliance on coffee exports help Rwanda achieve more economic sustainability or will it put the Rwandan economy at potential risk (as witnessed during the crash of the coffee market in the late 1980s)?

Maraba Coffee Cooperative was formed in 1999 with 204 members. Their goal is to promote specialty coffee, fight poverty and ignorance, and invest funds in rural areas of Rwanda. There are now 1,708 members in the cooperative, and the income they generate from coffee production ensures that members and their families all have health insurance and the ability to send their children to school. To help implement their projects, Maraba has received funding from the US Agency for International Development and has also been working in close collaboration with the Partnership to Enhance Agriculture In Rwanda through Linkages (PEARL).



Because Rwanda is a small country and very densely populated, Maraba and other coffee producers have decided to produce specialty coffee. In other words, they are producing high quality coffee instead of exporting coffee in mass quantities. Maraba is working to perfect several of the key ingredients to producing specialty coffee: more washing stations, reducing transportation time and distance, and supporting a high level of quality control for taste and flavor.



A visit to the Maraba "cupping room"



Tour of a coffee washing station

In an effort to achieve sustainability, the cooperative is currently working to decrease its reliance on outside funding. They are considering helping to form and train similar cooperatives in other areas of the country.

Coffee from the Maraba cooperative is currently distributed by U.S. coffee retailers Green Mountain Coffee and Community Coffee.

Where to Buy Rwandan Coffee

Special Reserve Rwanda-Karaba Bourbon

www.greenmountaincoffee.com

Rwanda Blue Bourbon

www.starbucksstore.com

One Thousand Hills Custom Roast

shop.msu.edu

Gorilla Fund Coffee

store.gxonlinestore.org/gorillafund.html

YADDI

Using Technology as a Tool for Youth Development

While GYC's Rwanda program is still in its first year, we've had several opportunities to make connections and deepen our investment with our collaborating organizations.

For example, YADDI is an organization devoted to bridging the development information divide among youth and networking their efforts for sustainable development. In January 2006, YADDI's director, Cleophas Kanamugire participated in a training workshop sponsored by GYC and Never Again-Rwanda in Kigali. Since then, Cleophas has stayed in touch with GYC and U.S. delegation members, sharing ideas about how we can all continue to work together.

When Cleophas received information on the next group of GYC participants coming to Rwanda, he wrote to introduce himself and welcome collaboration. Even before the new group arrived, a friendship developed between Cleophas and delegation member Bryan Reagan. As a technology expert, Bryan was inspired by YADDI's work and, thanks to his fundraising leadership before leaving for Rwanda, GYC was able to provide a small grant to YADDI of \$200. This grant will help YADDI purchase new computers to train youth in Butare on critical computer and internet technology skills. Furthermore, Bryan also worked closely with Cleophas to develop a new website for YADDI. (www.yaddi.org)

We recently visited YADDI's office in Butare and participants dropped off educational materials that they had brought with them from the U.S. for their resource library. YADDI sent another representative of its organization to participate in our workshop on human rights advocacy. Later, members of GYC's documentation team interviewed him and others working with YADDI for the documentary they are creating about the problem of illiteracy. Cleophas is also working with GYC to identify Rwandan handicrafts that could be sold in the U.S. to raise money for GYC's small grants fund and to benefit Rwandan youth projects.

For more information: www.yaddi.org

While in Butare we also visited the campus of the National University of Rwanda and took a tour of Radio Salus, the university's radio station where a Rwandan participant from the workshop, Placide Magambo, works.



GYC delegation members and Rwandan friends outside of Radio Salus

RAPSIDA

Youth Helping Prevent HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS in Rwanda, as in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, remains a critical challenge. Infection rates increased as a result of the civil war and the use of sexual violence, including rape, as a method of the genocide. Rwandans are now working to fight back against the spread of this disease. In particular, education is as a powerful prevention tool and can also help minimize discrimination of those currently living with HIV/AIDS.

To learn more about what is being done to fight HIV/AIDS in Rwanda, our delegation visited the work of RAP Contra le SIDA (RAPSIDA), the HIV/AIDS prevention program of Rwandans and Americans in Partnership. One of RAPSIDA's core programs is engaging youth in prevention activities through peer education clubs in secondary schools.

Our group visited a secondary school in the village of Musha, about one hour outside of Kigali. In Musha, the RAPSIDA club is composed of about 50 youth who educate their peers and the community about AIDS, primarily through the use of theater. We gathered in a classroom to hear about the many different activities of the club, including the *Ikimenyetso Kibyiringiro* (Badge of Hope) program. Beaded pins combining the colors of the Rwandan flag with the AIDS awareness ribbon are made by a local association of people living with HIV/AIDS. Youth who choose to wear the pin are taking a visible stand as individuals committed to acting in responsible ways to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. There is one special "big pin" that is worn by one person each week after their name is drawn out of a basket. Volunteers wearing the badge are asked to perform specific responsibilities, including answering any questions other students might have about their experiences and HIV/AIDS.



RAPSIDA club members share information about their activities with GYC

After meeting with the students, we sat down with some of the student leaders at a lunch prepared by the local association of community members living with HIV/AIDS. Following the meal, we gathered in a crowded auditorium to watch a play the students had written about how people are unfairly discriminating against those who have HIV/AIDS.

To develop the idea of the play, students interviewed members of the community who are living with HIV/AIDS. Drama is a very powerful educational tool in Rwanda and it is clear that these students are making a difference and taking action to help prevent the further spread of HIV/AIDS in their community.

For more information on RAPSIDA:
www.rapsida.blogspot.com



Lunch prepared by a local association of community members living with HIV/AIDS



RAPSIDA club members perform an original drama based on the stories they gathered from local community members living with HIV/AIDS and the discrimination they face in their daily lives

USAID

U.S. Support for Rwanda's Development

The US Agency for International Development is responsible for managing the investment of US foreign aid in development projects that are

considered a priority by the Rwandan government. USAID's three main areas of work in Rwanda are: democracy and governance, rural and agricultural development, and health. Working in Rwanda since 1962, USAID has spent more than \$100 million on Rwanda's development in 2006 alone.

While some of these projects are 100% focused on youth development, almost all of USAID's projects provide some important benefit to young Rwandans. Examples of specific youth-focused projects include one program where 23,200 youth have received training in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and human rights. In the near future, USAID will sponsor another project which will broadcast a weekly radio program on conflict resolution as a platform to exchange views and share information. USAID has also supported four Dushishoze youth centers (Dushishoze means "let's be careful") which provide recreational and health activities and the Nkundabana ("I love children") project which is a program reaching 29,000 child-headed households. Recognizing the importance of supporting the unique needs of genocide survivors, USAID contributes funding to the genocide survivors fund, especially to support secondary school education for the children of survivors.

For more information: www.usaid-rwanda.rw

LDGL

Fighting for Human Rights

The Ligue des Droits de la Personne dans la Region des Grands Lacs (LDGL) is an umbrella organization for human rights organization which is currently composed of members from Rwanda, Burundi and Eastern Zaire. Their primary goal is to coordinate activities to promote and defend of human rights and basic liberties.

The GYC delegation met with the Executive Secretary of LDGL, Francine Rutazana, who discussed at length the connection of current violations of human rights to the consequences of the 1994 genocide. One example is the *gacaca* justice system, in which there is potential for further violations of human rights including the intimidation and targeting of victims or witnesses by accused perpetrators.



Outside LDGL's office in Kigali

As we planned to observe a *gacaca* proceeding during our time in Rwanda, the briefing we received at LDGL about the classification of genocide crimes was very helpful. There are four different categories under which suspected perpetrators are being tried:

Category 1 is the most serious and focuses on the leaders of the genocide. Rwandans being tried for Category 1 crimes are automatically tried in front of the normal judicial system, not *gacaca*. The sentence of those who are found guilty in Category 1 is the death penalty. There is also a separate International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) run by the United Nations and based in Arusha, Tanzania which is trying those considered the most responsible for the Rwandan genocide. According to LDGL, the difference as to whether a suspected *genocidaire* is tried in the Rwandan court system or at the ICTR is whether or not the suspect has left the country. Those still living in Rwanda are tried in Rwandan courts; those who have left the country are brought to justice in front of the ICTR. The ICTR does not hand down the death penalty as a sentence for those it tries and finds guilty. According to current plans, the ICTR's mandate will finish in 2008 and any cases have not yet been tried by the ICTR will be sent to the national court system in Rwanda.

Category 2 refers to those who immediately began to kill others when the order to kill was passed down from Rwanda's leaders. Those tried in Category 2 typically killed many people, not only in their own community but in other communities as well. This category of crimes is tried under the *gacaca* system.

Category 3 focuses on those people who killed because they had been forced to kill. During the genocide, Rwanda's leaders ordered all Hutu to be involved in the killing and those who refused were sometimes forced to kill, often at the threat of losing their own life or the life of their family members if they did not participate. Those found guilty are typically imprisoned. This category is also tried under the *gacaca* system.

Category 4 crimes refer to the stealing and looting of property during the genocide and are also tried by the *gacaca* system. The typical punishment under this category of crime is to give back what was stolen or provide reparations of some kind.

We also discussed with LDGL the challenges and threats faced by some human rights workers in Rwanda by the government. During the 2003 election period, some human rights organizations monitoring the elections came in conflict with the government. In some cases, human rights workers were accused of having a divisionist ideology due to their opposition. Several prominent human rights activists were forced to flee the country and a human rights organization was closed down by the government. Although the situation has seemed to improve recently and work on economic, social and cultural issues continues without much government opposition, human rights defenders sometimes face challenges and intimidation from the government when they are trying to address political concerns.

For more information: www.ldgl.org

Initiative for Inclusive Security ***Promoting Women's Political Leadership***

Women are playing an unprecedented role in political leadership in post-conflict Rwanda: 49% of the seats in the Parliament Lower House are occupied by women, far exceeding the constitutionally mandated quota. Rwanda has one of the highest rates of representation by women in politics anywhere in the world. It is clear that such a high level of women's involvement in political decision-making will have a groundbreaking impact on policymaking.

The Initiative for Inclusive Security recently established an office in Rwanda for the specific purpose of documenting the impact of women's participation in politics while at the same time

helping to build the capacity of those women leaders who have been elected. The Initiative for Inclusive Security advocates for the full participation of all stakeholders, especially women, in peace processes. The Rwanda Project aims to: research and document the Rwandan experience of women's leadership; produce a model of sustainable, replicable leadership training; strengthen the capacity of elected and appointed women leaders at the national level through a comprehensive program of skills training; support the development of the next generation of women leaders by providing opportunities to young, local, or grassroots women leaders that prepares them for national-level leadership; and connect Rwandan women with a broader network of peace builders so that women in other war-affected countries can learn from their experiences and achievements.



Meeting with Senator Aloisea Inyumba

We were honored to be able to discuss the impact of women's political leadership in Rwanda with Senator Aloisea Inyumba, who provided her personal testimony to the challenges and achievements of women in leadership. Senator Inyumba was the first Minister of Gender following the genocide at the age of 26 and also served as Governor and Executive Secretary of Unity and Reconciliation. According to Senator Inyumba, women are helping to shape the policy priorities of Rwanda in a new way. For example, many women leaders are working to make children's rights and youth issues a central priority of their decision-making. Yet, she also acknowledged that while things are definitely changing, there is still a long way to go, particularly in bridging the gap between the creation of laws and policies and their implementation.

We would also like to extend a special thanks to Senator Inyumba for inviting us to her home for an evening of dancing and exchange of ideas with a local secondary school club of genocide survivors.

For more information:

www.womenwagingpeace.net

National Human Rights Commission *Investigating and Preventing Government Abuses of Human Rights*

The National Commission of Human Rights is a Rwandan government institution responsible for sensitizing and promoting the protection of human rights. They work in collaboration with government institutions, NGOs, and associations to investigate denunciations that they receive about rights being violated by government authorities. The Commission is also responsible for monitoring the *gacaca* process and ensuring that the rights of the victims are respected. In addition, the Commission monitors elections and conducts prison visits to verify that prisoner's rights are being respected.

Human rights education is a major function of the Commission and they work to sensitize the general population about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and their rights under the Rwandan constitution. For example, they host a radio show each Friday night, publish magazines, encourage the media to write about human rights issues, speak with university, student groups and ex-combatants, etc.

When asked what human rights violations are most frequently reported to them, the President of the Commission noted that most of the cases they receive are related to assets and property, illegal arrests and detentions and violations of children's rights.

FACT-Rwanda *Educating the Next Generation About Human Rights*

FACT-RWANDA is a Rwandan organization initiated to address human rights issues related to torture and organized violence. The founders are human rights activists, including lawyers, physicians, and students from the Medical Students

Association (MEDSA) at National University in Butare.

One of their major projects are "human rights clubs" in secondary schools in Cyangugu, a region of Rwanda bordering on Lake Kivu and the Democratic Republic of Congo that was hit very hard during the genocide. FACT has created clubs in 60 secondary schools and 300 primary schools. They are training teachers, organizing events and providing support to club activities. The students are given the responsibility to manage the clubs themselves. The overall objective is to assist children in learning how to fight against torture, violence and other human rights violations.

Upon arriving at the Ihumure human rights club we were immediately welcomed by members and other students at the school and treated to a performance of traditional Rwandan dancing and songs and a special drama performance by club members



"Welcome in the Club Fact Ihumure"

In this group fieldwork project, GYC delegation members were asked to create a collaborative one-day workshop and exchange between our group and approximately 40 students from a human rights club. Our group decided that teams would lead a series of interactive activities to help facilitate dialogue and sharing between us and the students. For example, we played "human rights Frisbee" where each person who caught the Frisbee had to name a human rights issue. As a group, we identified several priority children's rights concerns and created drawings on these priority issues to discuss the differences between our two countries.

In discussing the difference between children's rights in Rwanda and the U.S., our group noticed that the Rwandan groups identified very similar problems that they share in common, such as the challenges of girls' access to education. We also noted that when thinking about human rights, the Rwandan students did not start by thinking about government policies but rather about how human rights are experienced in the family and in the community.



Human rights activity



Practicing letter writing on human rights concerns

Lawrence Manzi, a coordinator from FACT-Rwanda who accompanied us to Cyangugu and a GYC alumnus from the January 2006 human rights training workshop, had mentioned to us that one of the challenges that the club members face is figuring out how to translate their knowledge of human rights issues into taking action to affect

change. So, after discussing some ideas with him, our group decided to share information with the students on how to write letters expressing their opinions and ideas to decisionmakers as one way of potentially creating change on the issue. After reviewing the components of an effective letter, students worked in small groups to write a letter to a leader that they felt should hear their views on the human rights issues that we had been talking about. Many students wrote letters about education issues to their headmaster and to the Minister of Education. Most students enjoyed writing the letter-writing exercise and expressing their ideas about the issues but at the end of the day preferred not to have the letters delivered. While in the U.S., letter writing campaigns are a very common tool for achieving change on a wide range of social issues, the political and cultural climate in Rwanda is quite different. Even though the letters were not given to decisionmakers, we hope that the process of writing the letters helped students begin to think through actions that need to be taken to create change on the important human rights issues that they care about.

GYC has made a grant of \$1,000 from its small grants fund to FACT-Rwanda. They will use the funds to support and expand their human rights education work in Cyangugu.

For more information: www.fact.org.rw/

Gacaca ***Searching for Justice and Reconciliation***

The search of justice and reconciliation in Rwanda continues. *Gacaca* is a system of community justice based on traditional practices. Due to the sheer number of genocide cases pending, large number of prisoners in jail awaiting trial, and limited resources, the formal court system has been unable to handle the caseload in a timely manner. In addition to speeding up the trial process, *gacaca* also provides a direct way for Rwandans to participate in the process of justice. However, the system continues to present many on-going challenges, such as ensuring that witnesses who step forward to give testimony are not threatened or intimidated by perpetrators or others when they return to their community. This is especially problematic since prisoners who have served a sufficient sentence often return back to their community to live next door to their accusers upon their release from jail. At the same time, *gacaca* is providing an important opportunity for Rwandans

to publicly account for individual actions during the 1994 genocide.

In January 2006, GYC observed a *gacaca* which involved the widespread participation of the local community to gather information for future trials. No prisoners were present and no witnesses gave testimony on specific cases. In an effort to better understand the different aspects of the *gacaca* process, this time we observed part of the actual trials of several accused prisoners. Each of these trials was drawing to a close, so in addition to being able to hear testimony from both prisoners and witnesses, we were present for the sentencing of both cases.

The first trial was of a community leader who was in charge during the time of the genocide. This trial was particularly interesting because the judges for the *gacaca* emphasized the important role he played as a leader. The judges asked the prisoner:

“Even if you did not kill someone yourself, how could you be a leader of your community and let all these people die without taking action?”

Throughout the questioning and testimony, the prisoner was asked repeatedly about his leadership role in the community and whether he had played a role in encouraging others to engage in the violence. In particular, much of the testimony focused on whether or not he was responsible for creating and leading a so-called “crisis committee” which may have been tracking people who had fled, ensuring them that they would be safe, and then bringing them back to the community to be killed.

One young woman testified that her father, a Tutsi, went to the accused because he was a local leader and asked him for help to escape. Her father was given a document by the prisoner that possessed a special stamp allowing him to pass through the roadblocks. The document he was given did not say whether he was Hutu or Tutsi; rather, the stamp was enough to give him permission to pass without being bothered. The issue of the stamp turned out to be a decisive one. Under whose authority was the leader operating? Who gave him the authority to possess such a special stamp? According to the judges, the very fact that he possessed the stamp and its authority was recognized demonstrated that he had power and leadership during the genocide. In other words, although the action he took was

technically intended to help a Tutsi escape, it actually showed his complicity in the genocide as a leader.

At the sentencing, the judges found that since he was a leader, his case could not be sentenced by the *gacaca* court. Instead, he needed to be tried for Category 1 crimes (reserved for leaders during the genocide). His case was referred to jurisdiction of the nation court system which processes all Category 1 trials. If he is found guilty, his sentence could be the death penalty.

The second trial was of a woman who was accused of collaborating with the Interahamwe and others to enable the killing of Tutsi in the community during the genocide. In one emotional exchange during the testimony in this case, the judges, prisoner and witness discussed the importance of asking for and accepting forgiveness as part of the process of justice and reconciliation.

The judges urged the prisoner to offer an apology.

“You can see she is visibly hurt. We can’t force you to forgive but don’t you feel something? Try to open your heart and release your pain. It is hard to say but it is better to release this pain.”

“I am asking you for forgiveness,” the prisoner said, standing across the room from the woman she had been accused of betraying during the genocide.

“But I am not ready to forgive her....,” the witness told the judges.

The judges urged the witness to accept the woman’s apology in the name of reconciliation. After some thought, she decided to accept the prisoner’s apology.

The judges then turned to accused and asked, “Will you ever do again what you are asking forgiveness for?”

“No, I won’t.”

After deliberating the testimony and information received in this case, the prisoner was found guilty and immediately released into the care of her family.

Fieldwork Projects

Volunteer Assistance to Rwandan Organizations

One of the most challenging and rewarding activities that delegation members participate in is independent fieldwork with local Rwandan organizations and in collaboration with GYC projects. In addition to learning about the projects of each individual organization, delegation members also learn how to navigate the complexities of working in a cross-cultural setting. They also find ways to translate their skills and ideas to be relevant and useful to the needs of the organizations they are working with. This can be quite difficult given language barriers, different cultural expectations, and limited resources and office space. Oftentimes, a volunteer comes into the fieldwork experience with a set of specific ideas of what the work is going to be like only to find that the reality of working in Rwanda is quite different than they thought. Yet, a situation that at first can seem overwhelming or confusing can result in volunteers learning new things about themselves while at the same time contributing in a valuable way to the work of Rwandan organizations.



Here are just some of the ways in which members of this delegation helped give back to the work of Rwandan organizations:

- Created new for several Rwandan organizations, including Fight Illiteracy Youth Organization, Uvisenga N'Manzi, FACT-Rwanda and YADDI.
- Worked on a documentation project addressing an important human rights concern in Rwanda:

illiteracy. This project was a follow-up to the training workshop on human rights advocacy. They collected interviews, video footage and stories on the work of organizations addressing the issue that will be turned into a short, 5-minute documentary. The documentary will be used to raise awareness about Rwanda and raise funds that will be reinvested in projects aimed at combating illiteracy in Rwanda.

- Accompanied young genocide orphans to a memorial being built to bury and honor their parents and other family members killed during the genocide



- Wrote an annual report for a human rights organization
- Investigated and wrote a report on the situation of refugees fleeing from Tanzania into Rwanda
- Assisted in writing and developing grant proposals and helped organizations identify new potential sources of funding for their work
- Conducted site visits to evaluate projects
- Represented the organization at conferences
- Edited documents, reports and proposals in English and translated documents, such as funding proposals and program reports, from French into English
- Developed an educational workshop on the issue of genocide orphans in Rwanda to be used for GYC's high school program in the U.S.

Fieldwork Organizations

We would like to extend our thanks to the following organizations for opening their doors to our volunteers. We are grateful for the opportunity to learn more about their work and to play a small part in contributing to their ability to achieve their goals.

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

For more information:
www.neveragaininternational.org

Sports and Culture for Peace Foundation in the Great Lakes: Their mission is to help children living in difficult circumstances, especially street children, child-headed families and HIV infected and affected children by showing them how to live in peace through sports.

AVEGA: AVEGA works to empower genocide widows to deal with the past experiences and to rebuild their shattered lives. Major programs include psycho-social and medical services and counseling, capacity-building programs (such as micro-credit), and advocacy, information and justice program to ensure the respect of the rights of genocide survivors.

For more information: www.avega.org.rw

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

FACT-Rwanda: A human rights organization addressing the issues of torture and organized violence in Rwanda in order to contribute to the eradication of torture as well as the recognition, defense and rehabilitation of victims.

Youth Association for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (AJIPRODHO): An association of Rwandan youth working together to promote human rights at the local and national

level in Rwanda, through human rights education and other activities.

For more information:
www.geocities.com/jjukirwa

Taking Action

GYC encourages all delegation participants to share what they've learned with their friends and family and persuade others to get involved. Some participants pursue individual initiatives such as making presentations and writing articles and papers for publication. Many decide to also become involved in follow-up projects identified by the group on the last day of the program, such as raising money for the small grants fund to benefit Rwandan youth projects and organizing a documentary film screening when the short film produced by the GYC documentation team is finished.

Actions that members of this delegation are committed to taking include:

- Staying in touch via e-mail to continue the exchange of ideas
- Creating a short documentary to highlight the challenges of illiteracy in Rwanda and the work of Fight Illiteracy Youth Organization (FIYO)
- Organizing local film screenings for our documentary and providing copies of the film to organizations and policymakers in Rwanda
- Raising funds in support of the work of the Rwandan organizations who are working to support youth and priority human rights issues in the country
- Educating others about our experiences through meetings and events
- Developing educational curriculum to engage U.S. high school students on issues surrounding the challenges faced by genocide orphans
- Investing in successful youth projects by making small grants to organizations like Uyisenga N'Manzi, Never Again-Rwanda and FACT-Rwanda
- Finding ways to continue to support our Rwandan colleagues
- Organizing future delegations and training programs for young human rights defenders, in Rwanda, in the U.S. and also extending the work to the Great Lakes region (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo & Rwanda)

- Staying involved with GYC, from participating in the annual alumni retreat to volunteering to serve as a leader on a committee

Ways You Can Get Involved

- Learn more about Rwanda
- Work with GYC to organize a film screening in your community
- Attend an event we are hosting at your school or in your community
- Invite us to speak with students or others in your community about Rwanda
- Make a donation to the small grants fund to support Rwandan youth projects
- Contribute to GYC's scholarship fund to enable motivated young leaders to take part in our programs
- Visit Rwanda or participate in a delegation



U.S. Participant Bios

John Connelly

John is a junior at The College of New Jersey majoring in international studies with a minor in Spanish. He is a member of several service and academic honorary societies and has extensive leadership experience coordinating events and fundraising. He has completed over 200 hours of community service with the Circle K Community Service Organization at his college and was a Drum Corps International World Champion with the Cadets of Bergen County Drum Corps. During high school, John participated in the National Youth Forum on Defense, Intelligence, and Diplomacy. He has a deep interest in human rights, foreign policy, and Rwanda in specific. In his spare time, John enjoys reading, running, playing the trumpet, community service, and art. After completing his BA, John plans to attend law school and study international law.

Elizabeth Davis

Elizabeth is completing her senior year at Vanderbilt University after spending the 2005 spring semester traveling and volunteering in Cuba, Mexico, El Salvador, and Ecuador. After her return, she spent 3 months as a Government Advocacy Intern focusing on Latin America at Amnesty International in Washington, DC. At her university, Elizabeth is instrumental in several campus organizations. She helped form Fashion for a Cause, an organization that raises money for cancer research through a fashion show and other fundraising. She is also the publicity chair for Students for Kenya, an organization dedicated to raising money to help build a medical clinic in a small village in Kenya and is an officer in the Vanderbilt University chapter of STAND (Students Taking Action Now: Darfur). Elizabeth has a special interest in Rwanda, writing several undergraduate papers on the role of women in post-conflict development and Rwanda's economic and political development. After the delegation, she will stay in Rwanda, working with family friends who run a health clinic outside Ruhengeri. She hopes to spend the next year or two in Africa and then return to the U.S. to obtain a masters degree in International Development or Peace and Conflict Resolution.

Jessica Demulder

As an Administrative Project Coordinator at Health Services at Columbia University, Jessica manages projects supporting administration and departmental programs, performs research and analysis, and plans special events. She has a BS from Syracuse University in biology with a concentration in premedical health professions. She has extensive experience as a human rights activist through her volunteer work with Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and STAND. She has also worked as a student biologist in New Zealand and as a TESL volunteer at the International Center in NYC. She spent one year as an environmental steward with AmeriCorps in Reno, Nevada and worked as a grassroots organizer for the 2004 presidential election. Jessica's most immediate goal is to become a full-time student at the School of International and Public Affairs and the School of Law at Columbia University while continuing her work as a Program Manager part-time. She plans to obtain a combined degree, MIA and JD, concentrating in human rights and human rights law.

Laura Heaton

Laura is currently working at Agent France-Presse as a multi-media assistant editor in Washington, DC. She graduated from Connecticut College in May 2005 with a BA in international relations, where she conducted an independent study on the effects of human rights on state sovereignty and the evolution of the norm of sovereignty in the field of international relations. During her undergraduate studies, Laura worked as a research

assistant, primarily focusing on women's movements and the democratization of Africa. She also worked as a research assistant during her 6 month study abroad in Hanoi, Vietnam. In addition, Laura spent 5 months studying in Paris, France, and a two month summer internship at 'Enfants du Monde' in Madagascar. Laura was instrumental in the establishment of the Connecticut College chapter of STAND (Students Taking Action Now: Darfur) as the co-founder and co-chair. Through her travels and studies, Laura has gained a high intermediate proficiency in French.

Zaid Jivani

Raised in Vancouver, Zaid is now in his second year at the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington, DC where he is studying international politics with a concentration in foreign policy and policy processes. Zaid's interest in Rwanda began at a young age through stories from his grandparents, who were forced to leave Rwanda because they were perceived to be Tutsi sympathizers. These accounts contributed to Zaid's interest in development and conflict management in Africa and have fostered a desire to visit Rwanda and learn how future genocides can be prevented. He has experience working in business development, hosts a radio show at his university, and has been awarded numerous awards for public speaking and debate. His volunteer experiences include initiating projects at his high school to raise community awareness about cancer in coordination with the Canadian Cancer Society. Zaid has a working knowledge of both French and Spanish.



Haley Koch

During a year off between high school and college, Haley is traveling and volunteering throughout Africa and the Middle East. She recently completed five weeks of volunteering at an orphanage outside Cape Town, South Africa and has since traveled overland through Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Tanzania. Haley will spend January working at the Friends (Quaker) School in Ramallah, West Bank. During her travels, Haley has

fallen in love with the people and cultures of Africa and maintained her strong interest in human rights. She was the first and only American participant in the Crossing Borders seminar at the International People's Conference in Denmark, where she discussed conflict resolution issues and aided in the publication of a magazine with Israeli, Palestinian, and Jordanian youth that was distributed to 10,000 people in the Middle East. She also spent a summer working at a children's camp in Croatia that brings together Muslim, Serbian, and Croatian youth. In the U.S., Haley was a participant in a year long program entitled City at Peace; a program in Washington, DC that uses the performing arts to teach and promote cross-cultural understanding and non-violent conflict resolution. She has extensive experience working with political campaigns as well, serving as an intern at the office of Senator Barbara Boxer, a volunteer in the John Kerry presidential campaign, and the Mid-Atlantic Region's High School Chair in the Howard Dean Presidential Campaign. Haley has received a full four year scholarship to the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and will begin her study in fall 2006.



Alyson Martin

Alyson is a junior communications major and Spanish minor at the College of Saint Rose. She is also a freelance writer for the Albany Times Union, specializing in human interest stories. She is the managing editor of her college newspaper and the executive editor of her college magazine. She also has experience working with children as a summer camp counselor. Alyson's deep interest in Rwanda stemmed from her relationship with a Rwandan woman who is a survivor of the genocide. Alyson is inspired and impassioned by her friend's heroic story and hopes to use her skills in communication to increase knowledge about the genocide and the current situation in Rwanda. Her goal after graduation is to find a profession in journalism that allows her to fulfill her writing interests as well as her passion to help others.

Bryan Reagan

Bryan is a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison studying political science and history. He works full-time at a computer repair center and volunteers IT support to businesses and organizations around the Madison community. He will be participating in the Semester at Sea program next semester and recently returned from his second trip to Thailand, where he developed websites for NGO's around Bangkok specializing in AIDS education and prevention and the betterment of quality of life for persons with disabilities. During his first trip to Thailand, Bryan worked in an orphanage for dually handicapped children where he cared for boys and aided in physical therapy programs. He hopes to learn numerous things from participation in this delegation, including how one perseveres through hardship like that experienced during the Rwandan genocide, how Rwandans define and seek justice, as well as what kind of IT is needed in Rwandan NGO's and how he can help. One way that Bryan is planning on contributing in this area is through the creation of a foundation to give non-profits IT support. Simultaneously, Bryan plans to begin paramedic training at a vocational college and after completing EMT training he will enroll in the International Degree and Humanitarian Assistance program run by the Center for International Health and Cooperation.



Basha Rubin

Basha is a third year political science major at Yale University interested in the study of comparative genocide and the role of class collective-action theory on the perpetrators of genocide. She hopes to pursue this field of study throughout her academic career and strongly believes that attempting to understand the motivations of the perpetrators of genocide rather than dehumanizing them is essential to stopping future genocides. Her coursework on genocide and specific issues related to the case of Rwanda continued during her semester abroad at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Basha has interned and volunteered with various non profit organizations and at the offices of prominent politicians; such as People for the American Way,

CityProject, Peace by PEACE and the offices of Senator Charles Schumer, Councilwoman Eva Moskowitz, and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. These experiences have shown her that progress only comes when everyone feels that their ideas are recognized, discussed, and integrated and strengthened her faith in the ability of citizens to change the political process. She has written several papers in relation to genocide studies, including "Understanding the Rwandan Genocide Using Collective Action Theory" and "The Costs and Benefits of Hotel Rwanda: An Analysis of the Consciousness Raising Potential for Viewers and Harms to the Victim Group." Her paper entitled "Eating Disorders and Body Image Distortion in the United States, Tibet, India, and France" won the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Award. After graduation, Basha intends to pursue a degree in international human rights law.

Tiffany Shumate

Tiffany is a Ghanaian-American woman currently studying developmental psychology with a concentration in Education and Africana Studies at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. The focus of her studies is the trauma of resettlement for African children and how they develop protective barriers to deal with acculturation issues in the U.S., particularly in public schools. She is presently working at the Nationalities Service Center counseling and interviewing children about their experiences here in the U.S. and in their native countries. She has worked closely with children ages 5-17 for 6 years at similar organizations and plans to use these skills to help educate and form a plan of action for children in Rwanda. Some of these experiences include working as a tutor at America Reads, America Counts, an extern at the Helen Keller Learning Center, and a volunteer at Big Brothers, Big Sisters of New Jersey. She also is a member of The Sisterhood, a group at her college where she has developed workshops on Black Feminism and is the committee head for Black History Month and is the Community Diversity Assistant at the Office of Intercultural Affairs. Tiffany feels that her calling is to become an educator and wants to teach children how to think critically about their situation in society related to others and societal inequality.

Heidi Smith

Heidi is a student at Haverford College majoring in English with a concentration in peace and conflict studies and anticipated minor in Art History. She has just returned from time abroad in Ireland where she studied at University College Dublin. Heidi's interest in human rights began to increase during her sophomore year of high school, when after reading an article about HIV/AIDS in Africa, she started a chapter of Amnesty International at her school. This interest has manifested itself in her involvement in Model United Nations, coursework on Peace and Conflict studies, job as publicity coordinator for the Center for Peace and Global Citizenship, as well as with her internship with the

Project on Ethnic Relations, a small group that mediates high level talks between political and advocate groups in Central Europe. Heidi has also worked as a research assistant for a professor at Haverford developing a course on protest literature in the U.S., as the director of her school chapter of Care Cards, a group that makes cards for children's and veteran's hospitals, nursing homes, and homeless shelters, and as a volunteer at the AIDS Service Network where she cares for children of people with HIV/AIDS. She is especially interested the possibilities and limitations of the documentary format as a mode of education and expression.

Naomi Sully

An avid traveler and a recognized activist on campus, Naomi is currently transferring from Clark University where she was majoring in international development and social change with a minor in Spanish. Naomi has been traveling internationally since she was 9 years old which has shaped her interests in conflict resolution and human rights. These experiences include studying at the Center for Language and Intercultural Exchange in Seville, Spain, volunteering with Amigos de las Americas in Honduras, an internship in Russia with Jewish Women International, and spending three weeks in Eastern Europe visiting concentration camps and existing Jewish communities. She is actively engaged in community service work within the US as well having volunteered with Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts, the Interfaith Housing Coalition, and CASA of Maryland, a non-profit worker's rights organization. On campus, she created a social action organization called Active Citizenship Today and currently sits on two organizational committees. Last spring, she served as the Coalition Coordinator with the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group where she worked to pass a bill on energy efficiency standards. Naomi speaks advanced Spanish.

Christina Tilghman

Christina is a student at Wellesley College pursuing a degree in economics with a minor in education policy. She has worked as a guide cultivator for the past three years at Multicultural Youth Tour of What's Now, a non profit that uses the process of historical research to empower young people to become engaged citizens in their communities. She has also worked as a mentor in the Homework Assistance Program at Boston Public Library and as a youth organizer at Project H.O.O.D., assisting organizations develop in urban areas. Christina participated in a fellowship in South Africa through the International Youth Leadership Institute of New York and has been awarded the Most Outstanding Youth Worker by the Youth Workers Alliance of South End Boston. On campus, she is a radio intern and an active member of Ethos, an organization for women of African descent. Along with her degree, Christina hopes to travel to Cuba and various African countries to study educational development in urban areas.



Nikolas Wolfe

Nikolas is a sophomore at the University of Florida majoring in industrial and systems engineering and political science. He is deeply committed to educating others about human rights at his university. He is the president and founder of Human Rights Awareness on Campus Inc (HRAC), a non profit whose purpose is to educate and promote grassroots activism concerning worldwide human rights violations, particularly in regards to genocide. They were the recipients of a \$10,000 grant from the Reebok Human Rights Foundation in 2005 for the MTV-U Darfur Activism Awards. Most recently, they have been coordinating their efforts with the STAND Coalition in promoting awareness and activism concerning the lack of international action to stop the genocide in Darfur. He is also the treasurer of the University of Florida undergraduate philosophy society and works on the technical crew at the university theater center. Nikolas won 4th place in the Florida Forensic League Foreign Extemporaneous Speaking competition in 2004 and is a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. He is proficient in both Spanish and Danish.

Rwandan Participant Bios

Nancy Akaliza

Nancy is currently pursuing a degree in business administration at the School of Finance and Banking. She is also an active member of Friends of Rwanda, an organization that works to help children orphaned by the genocide. Nancy is especially interested in collaborating with other participants in this learning community to educate others about the causes and ideology of genocide. She plans to continue her work with orphans and also hopes to serve in an organization that focuses on promoting unity and reconciliation.

Moses Gahigi

As the executive director of Fight Illiteracy Youth Organization, Moses is committed to promoting youth

development in Rwanda by fighting illiteracy and ignorance. He has a bachelor's degree in administration and education planning from the National University of Rwanda and has been working with youth daily since his graduation in 2000. Moses is looking forward to engaging in dialogue with other youth from Rwanda and the U.S. during this workshop and sharing experiences, especially relating to human rights and peace. He plans to continue advocating for Rwandan youth and educating them about human rights, peace and reconciliation, HIV/AIDS, and reproductive health.

Muhire Enock

No bio available.

Joelle Gatali

Joelle works as the director of protocol and public relations for the Rwanda United Nations Association, an organization working for a peaceful and united world through the promotion of the aims, principles, and ideals of the UN as enshrined in the UN charter. She is also a student at the National University studying medicine and is in charge of a micro project which promotes the understanding of gender issues in secondary schools. After graduation Joelle plans to serve as a medical doctor and continue human rights education in secondary schools and hopes that this workshop will enhance her understanding of human rights issues and people of different cultures.

Aflodis Kagaba

Aflodis is the outgoing president of the Youth Association for Human Rights Promotion and Development, a group that works to empower youth to respect human rights and advocates for responsible economic development. He has been actively involved in the reconstruction of Rwanda since the genocide, specifically through the mobilization of youth to fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS as well as by empowering them to become leaders in the development of their communities. He has a bachelor's degree in general medicine from the National University of Rwanda and plans to continue providing healthcare as well as specialize in the medical profession. He also plans to continue actively participating in Rwandan civil society and the reconstruction of his country.

Angelique Kayitesi

As the national coordinator at ARG-Impuhwe (Association of survivors of genocide) Angelique works to improve life conditions of genocide survivors in several sectors such as health, education, justice, and daily life. She has a degree in public administration from the National University. She is especially interested in working to establish safe spaces to discuss the protection of human rights with others. Her goal is to be an advocate for people in vulnerable situations, especially

genocide survivors. Angelique plans to use the knowledge gained through the interactions during this workshop in her work with the protection of genocide survivors. She is fluent in English, French, and Kinyarwanda.

Placide Magambo

Placide is currently a journalism student at the School of Journalism, Communication, and Radio at the National University. Through his studies, he aims to educate and inform others especially concerning human rights issues. Placide's experiences also include working at a refugee camp after secondary school. He enjoys sports, jokes and reading books and is proficient in French, English Swahili, Kinyarwanda, and speaks elementary Spanish.



Jennifer Mbabazi

Jennifer is a founding member and the Assistant Project Coordinator at Health Development Initiative-Rwanda, an organization whose mission is to promote education, poverty reduction, and health and community-based development that builds on alliances and networking. She is currently pursuing a degree in human medicine at the National University and has interned at King Faisal Hospital in various departments. Jennifer is committed to confronting the obstacles her country faces such as HIV/AIDS and social and economic problems. She has extensive experience with youth and development activities through her involvement with the university medical association and has attended numerous international workshops and conferences related to health issues. Jennifer hopes that this workshop will provide links for future collaborations in these fields. She is fluent in English, French, and Kinyarwanda and is proficient in Swahili.

Sam Musinguzi

Sam is the research coordinator at Next Generation Connect, an organization that strives to empower the generation currently in leadership and connect them with the next generation, especially women and youth. He has a legal degree, has focused specifically on reformulated laws in Rwanda and has attended numerous

programs and seminars on reconciliation and the promotion of the rule of law and social justice issues. He has also worked at a legal clinic at his university to educate Rwandans about the law and their legal rights. Sam is excited to interact with leaders from the U.S. and exchange views on human rights advocacy. He speaks English, French, Swahili, and Kinyarwanda.

James Mutanguha

James is a community volunteer at ADRA Rwanda, an organization that engages in humanitarian and development activities, provides assistance in situations of crisis or distress, promotes positive and sustainable change in communities, and assists in assuring child's survival to achieve their potentials. He is also the executive secretary of National Struggle for Unity, Peace and Prevention Against HIV/AIDS for Youth, an association in partnership with ADRA. He has been involved with Never Again programs since he was a Never Again representative at his high school and has worked as an education counselor in a World Vision program that focused on the prevention of child labor. He views this learning community as an opportunity to meet others who are engaged in the promotion of human rights and a space to share his experiences and challenges, while learning from those of others.

Aline Aurore Niyibizi

As a national officer at the Medical Students Association of Rwanda (MEDSAR), Aline works to raise awareness about gender issues and promote reproductive health. She is also the secretary of a family planning project and has a degree in medical studies. Aline has been trained in peer education related to reproductive health, project management, and fundraising. She plans to become a medical doctor and focus on achieving healthcare access for children and poor people. She speaks French, English, Kinyarwanda, and Swahili.

Josephine Nkurunziza

Josephine is a fourth year student studying economics and has been an active member of the University Women Students' Association where she focuses on the promotion of education for young girls for five years. She also volunteers as a mentor at Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE-Rwanda). Josephine has participated in numerous conferences and workshops on gender issues and strategies for effectively addressing community problems. Her experiences as an activist for the promotion of girl child education have contributed to her desire to engage in cross-cultural dialogue through this workshop concerning the universal meaning of human rights and collaborative actions that can be taken to promote them.

Cyprien Semushi

Cyprien currently works as a Youth-Led Development Officer at YADDI where he educates and provides training to youth on ways to obtain small loans and establish income generating associations. He also collects and utilizes audio and video materials as tools for education and awareness-raising. Cyprien is a fourth year student at the National University of Rwanda where he is focusing on translation and interpreting. As a language specialist, he strives to use his skills in creating a space for dialogue and the generation of ideas among young people to take action in the fields of conflict resolution, genocide prevention, and human rights. Cyprien is committed to continuing his work at YADDI educating and supporting the future leaders of Rwanda and sharing what he learns during this workshop with others. He is proficient in Kinyarwanda, English, French, and Swahili.

Jean Marie Twahirwa

Jean Marie works as the youth coordinator at the Youth's Love Presbyterian Center. In his position he promotes the welfare of former street children and helps them regain hope for the future. He also is currently a student at the School of Finance and Banking where he is studying Management. Through this workshop he hopes to learn about the leadership styles and strategies of others and resolution of conflicts, especially as related to youth. He believes that this will further strengthen his leadership skills and will benefit his work as a youth coordinator. Jean Marie is fluent in English, French, Kiswahili and Kinyarwanda.

