CONTENTS

02 Message from Board Chair
03 Message from Executive Director
04 Rwanda Program Overview
05 Colombia Program Overview
06 Emerging Leader Scholarship Program
07 #GYCRwanda
08 #GYCColombia
09 From Delegate to Board Member - Meghan Ramil
10 GYC Rwanda Alum: A Note
11 Meet Erika Rodriguez
12 New Partnership in South Africa
13 2019 Literary Salon
14 2020 Programs
15 Financials
16 Meet the Board Members
17 Donation Page
Dear friends,

As we head into 2020, I’d like to thank you for your support for helping move GYC into another successful year as we continue our mission to advance human rights by administering thought provoking curriculum based cross-cultural programs for emerging leaders.

2019 was an exciting year for GYC, as we welcomed our new Executive Director, Dechen Albero, and bid farewell to Jason Torreano who served 3+ years in the role.

I first learned about Global Youth Connect in 2017 after attending a fundraising event hosted by previous Board Vice-Chair, and current GYC Executive Director, Dechen Albero. I was struck by the commitment that staff, board members and most particularly GYC Alumni had in fostering human rights awareness across cultures and contributing to the global community with the lofty goal of making this world a better place - not the easiest of tasks!

As we look ahead, 2020 looks to be a wonderful year with delegations heading to Colombia where participants will explore human rights issues through the political power of music as well as an exciting partnership with Inkululeko to bring a delegation of activists to South Africa. It’s all quite thrilling to be a part of!

On behalf of GYC’s Board of Directors (quite the dynamic group in their own right!), please join us all in building and sustaining our programs around the world and supporting the great work that we do.

With warm regards,
Erin Abrams
Board Chair
GYC celebrated a banner year in 2019 with its 20th anniversary. Led by alumni, we hosted our 19th peace education delegation to Rwanda and 6th peacebuilding delegation to Colombia. The launch of the Emerging Leader Scholarship ensured a diverse range of participants from the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. Partnering with Sunday Salon NYC and SUNY Empire State University, we engaged new audiences through human rights film and literature events in New York City. Our upcoming January 2020 delegation to Colombia continues this work by focusing on the political power of music as a form of resistance.

We have big goals for 2020 which include the launch of a new technology and social change program in South Africa and building an international justice program in the Netherlands. In the United States, we will continue to build relationships with minority serving institutions in an effort to further diversify the types of young people who go abroad. We will also work to establish virtual exchange as an option so that we can better serve local Colombian and Rwandan populations who now number over 100 on our waitlist.

Your support throughout the years has played a vital role in GYC’s growth and success. As we look toward 2020 and the work ahead, I hope we can count on your continued engagement and enthusiasm for our mission. Together we can provide the next generation with the skills they need to act effectively as change agents for social justice both domestically and abroad. We cannot do this work without supporters like you!

In Solidarity,
Dechen Albero, PhD Candidate
Executive Director
“This program helped me critically think about human rights and peace promotion. It taught me about empathy, tolerance, and critical thinking.” - GYC Delegate

The January 2019 Delegation to Rwanda brought together 8 delegates from the United States, Canada, Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo for an intensive two-week program exploring human rights and peace education in a national and international context. Participants explored different notions about human rights and peace cultivation through group discussions, workshops, site visits, volunteer placements and a homestay.

This year’s delegation met with various governmental and non-governmental organizations working on the protection of human rights and peacebuilding. In partnership with Aegis Trust, delegates attended classes and workshops at the Kigali Genocide Memorial complex and completed a new curriculum taught in collaboration with the Kigali Peace School. Site visits included Esperance, an organization dedicated to promoting peace and reconciliation through sport, the Health Development Initiative, and Mind Leaps, a dance studio offering educational programs for street children founded by GYC Rwanda alum, Rebecca Davis. Delegates were also fortunate to meet with representatives from parliament, the ITORERO Commission and the ministries of youth and education.
The June 2019 Delegation to Colombia was dedicated to Peace Accord Implementation with a focus on gender. The delegation visited the capital city of Bogota where delegates gained an overview of the conflict and met leaders from government and the NGO sector. In Medellin, human rights organizations illuminated how the city was particularly impacted by the 50+ year civil war. An excursion to the countryside town of Granada showed how farmers are working to rebuild their society after years of forced displacement and mass violence.

To align with the gender focus, the delegation visited two organizations - La Gobernacion de Antioquia and the Asociacion de Mujeres de las Independencias. Through these meetings delegates learned about the types of programs and peace assemblies being implemented in the rural regions of the country to reintegrate female ex-combatants. Antioquia is the first state in the country to ensure implementation of a gender approach in post-conflict and it now serves as a model for Colombia.
Funding continues to be the chief obstacle for many who wish to participate in a GYC delegation. In an effort to increase accessibility, GYC undertook two new initiatives in 2019 to support delegates with high financial need.

The early application incentive discount program was instituted for all programs and offers a $400 discount on the program fee for highly motivated delegates who apply, interview and confirm their participation prior to the early admission deadline.

The Emerging Leader Scholarship fund was established in an effort to provide additional financial assistance to highly qualified delegates from underrepresented populations who would otherwise not be able to participate in a delegation. The fund awards up to $1000 in scholarship funding through a competitive application process. 2019 recipients included Roxana Perez (University of Pennsylvania), Sofia Pacheco-Pardo and Giuliana Speranza (Bennington College).

"Funding is the #1 barrier to study abroad. The Emerging Leader Scholarship provides financial assistance for highly qualified delegates who would otherwise not be able to participate in a delegation." said Dechen Albero, Executive Director.
#GYC COLOMBIA
I participated in the 2015 delegation to Rwanda before my senior year of college at Grand Valley State University in Michigan. I majored in International Relations and wanted to gain a deeper insight into human rights and genocide studies, especially in the context of Rwanda and the 1994 genocide.

In March 2019 I joined the GYC board because I really wanted to help the organization move forward and provide feedback based on my experiences in Rwanda. Not all of the board members have been able to experience the programs we offer, so it’s important to include alumni in the decision-making and outreach process.

After a few months on the board, I was invited to apply to serve as Social Media Chair. I was elected into the position and have been working with Duchen and Erin to promote our programs, #GivingTuesday advertising, and social media presence. What I’ve focused on most is engaging our alumni base with #ThrowbackThursday posts that show the work that previous delegations have done and posts with highlights for upcoming programs. We highlight facts about the cities that will be visited, organizations that we’ll be working with, and profiles of those who will be leading the delegations.

I would really like to get alumni more engaged by having quarterly profiles that can be posted online and shared across platforms. If future delegates can see the work that is being done by past participants, they will be more interested in applying for our programs. I’m excited to see what the New Year will bring!

Warmly,
Meghan Ramil
Social Media Chair
I am Denise Kayitesi, a Rwandan, and I attended Global Youth Connect’s Winter 2018/19 delegation in Rwanda. My experience with GYC was quite transformative--life changing both personally and professionally.

As a human rights activist, the GYC workshop was a two week intense program dedicated to learning about peacebuilding programs and reconciliation in partnership with the Aegis TRUST Rwanda. I got to engage and acquire knowledge on how peace and reconciliation are possible by looking specifically at Rwanda - a country totally torn apart by the 1994 Tutsi genocide - and its 25 year recovery. So many innocent lives were deprived a right to life and were inhumanely killed for who they are.

We all know that all human beings are entitled to all rights and none of us should be deprived of that despite any diversity. I got to personally understand fully that it is very important to respect every individual’s rights.

Professionally, my involvement with GYC has widened my communication, observation and intellectual skills where people must fully understand their role in society concerning human rights. We should all work together to find answers to underlying problems in our communities through a win-win solution as we consider empathy.

As a youth and a human rights activist, after the GYC experience, I have managed to reach out and have a positive impact in my community where I train fellow youth on values and principles of life aimed at shaping young people into future leaders who will transform nations positively through peacebuilding and respect for human rights. Together we can ensure a sustainable world that is economically, socially and politically stable.
Meet Erika Rodriguez
Alum, Colombia Program Director and Staff Board Rep

My journey with Global Youth Connect has been an exciting and life-changing one, and I am grateful for every moment of it, experiences I have had, and persons I’ve interacted with along the way. From student delegate in June 2017, to intern and volunteer that same year, to Program Assistant in 2018, leading up to Program Director and Ex Officio Board Member in 2019, I can honestly say that it has been an incredible educational and professional adventure.

Throughout these experiences, I have had program leaders become mentors to me, various organizations in Colombia interested in my thesis work, colleagues that have shared professional opportunities with me, and a deep connection with Colombia and the people there who are working tirelessly toward a peaceful country. Most importantly, I have been able to share these experiences with my alma mater, as well as students in the organizations that I was once a part of. When they see what I’m doing and reach out to ask questions about it, it makes me happy to know that our work is influencing curiosity about peacebulding, and motivating more students like myself to explore work in the field.

I cannot wait to see what lies ahead for GYC, and I am excited to have the opportunity to contribute in discussions about the future as an Ex Officio Board Member.

"I look forward to continue sharing the knowledge I've acquired, and passion for human rights with student delegates to come."
NEW PARTNERSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA

In summer 2019, GYC formalized cooperation with Inkululeko to jointly offer human rights program offerings in South Africa. Below are short summaries of the said organizations and their missions.

Global Youth Connect’s mission is to empower youth to advance human rights and create a more just world. GYC aims to build and support an international community of youth who are actively promoting human rights and peace promotion and creating a more peaceful world, as well as educating and inspiring the next generation to work for peaceful change.

Inkululeko’s mission is to provide South African township youth with the skills, support and guidance necessary to apply, attend and succeed in university or trade school.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in August 2019 and represents willingness of involved parties to work together on human rights and peace education promotion initiatives. The first joint program is scheduled to launch in June 2020. At the moment, the cooperation is based on Inkululeko’s leadership in regard to logistics and peace education module provision. If successful, all parties involved expressed their enthusiasm to continue working together in the future.
In collaboration with Sunday Salon NYC, GYC held a literary salon on February 17 at Von Bar in Manhattan.

During this inaugural event, several dozen people came out to listen to an international group of authors read their novels set around the world and learn more about GYC and its work. Authors included Wayetu Moore, Allison Albino, Ed Lin and Jose Gonzalez.

Following the reading, guests mingled with GYC board members and were able to look at materials from past delegations as well as letters written by past GYC delegates on their experience with GYC programs.

“The literary salon is a new initiative,” said Dechen Albero, Executive Director. “It allows us to share our work and connect with the arts which have proven important methods of reconciliation and peacebuilding in post-conflict countries like those we serve.”

More than $700 was raised to support the Emerging Leader Scholarship Fund.
2020 Programs

South Africa - June 2020

This special delegation is offered in partnership with our sister organization, Inkululeko. Participants will visit Cape Town and Makhanda and learn how technology is being used as a tool of social change to overcome inequality and the legacies of apartheid. Learn from inspiring human rights activists, immerse fully in local culture, and volunteer to mentor South African high school students. This rich overseas human rights program in a fascinating country promises to be a truly transformative experience and offers excellent professional development opportunities.

Colombia - January & June 2020

The political power of music is the theme of our winter delegation that will visit Bogota, Medellin and Cartagena. Participants will study freedom of artistic expression within the context of Colombia's 50+ year civil war.

Human rights and peacebuilding are the focus of our summer delegation that will visit Bogota and Medellin. Delegates will meet with leaders in Colombia's government, community organizers and experts on the country's history of violence and progress toward protecting human rights.
Financial Details

2019 Revenue

Individual Donors  11,827
Foundation Partners  25,000
Program Revenue  26,872

Total Revenue  63,699

2019 Expenses

Programming  29,149
Management & General  30,670

Total Expenses  59,819
MEET THE BOARD MEMBERS

Erin Abrams  
AFS Intercultural Programs, Chair

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I will make a gift of $ ______________ to Global Youth Connect.

Check is enclosed.
Credit card details are below:

Name on card: __________________________________________________________
Card number: ___  ___  ___  ___  ___  ___  ___  ___  ___  ___  ___  ___  ___  ___  ___
Security Code: ___  ___  ___
Expiration Date: ___  ___ / ___  ___
Address associated with card: _________________________________________
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Checks should be made payable to "Global Youth Connect"

Mailed to: Global Youth Connect
c/o 190 Violet Drive, Sanibel, FL 33957

Contributions can also be made online at
secure.givelively.org/donate/global-youth-connect/