Empowering Youth to Advance Human Rights in a Conflict Prone World

Bosnia Program Report

Conflict Resolution Delegation, Bosnia and Herzegovina

July 6 – July 20, 2015

In partnership with Center for Peacebuilding, Sanski Most
“The GYC program in Bosnia was an invaluable experience as it approached the process of conflict resolution in a multi-faceted way. From the UN, to the local government, to grassroots organisations like the ‘Centre for Peacebuilding’, we were taught that all of these realms are vital to Bosnia and Herzegovina’s future.”

Renee Wilkinson, 2015 delegate

“The delegation really encompassed the complexities of conflict and showed me just how many layers there are involved in peacebuilding.”

- Emily Walter, 2015 delegate

“Not only did the program deepen my understanding of the post-conflict challenges faced by Bosnians today, but it also exposed to me to a variety of like-minded individuals who shared my passion for international justice and human rights. Indeed, the GYC program extends beyond the mere two weeks spent in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and instead offers a culturally, academically, and professionally rewarding experience...”

- Pinar Çil, 2015 delegate

VIDEO: For more testimonies about participants’ experiences – including an introduction from GYC’s chairperson, Marie Berry (now of the Korbel School, Denver University) who participated in many of the delegation’s activities in Sarajevo – please see the video created by Jasminka Susmel, president of BONAVENTURA, the Association for the Improvement of Life and Culture, in Sarajevo.
Introduction from the Program Director:

I’ve had the privilege of leading conflict resolution delegations to Bosnia and Herzegovina for more than a decade. It is truly an honor to be able to create a platform for amazing young people from all over the world who are interested in visiting my homeland and learning about its painful past, troubled present, and hopeful future. With all its challenging dynamics, Bosnia remains an interesting location where students and practitioners of human rights, conflict resolution, and international relations can explore a range of issues in a safe environment. Given its complex past and the current challenging process of European integration, Bosnia is now at the crossroads of important political, social, and economic changes, at which our delegations have the chance to take an in-depth look.

July 2015 was an especially important time in Bosnian history: the 20th commemoration of the genocide at Srebrenica. Our delegation had a rare opportunity to spend a few days with local activists in Srebrenica, including a very powerful meeting with the deputy president of the Association of Mothers of Srebrenica. We heard the speeches of the world’s dignitaries and witnessed firsthand an incident with the Serbian Prime Minister; yet much more importantly, we witnessed, for hours the dignity and strength of thousands of mothers, sisters and daughters who – after all the media had long gone – continued to pick up the pieces of peace. Their courage to face daily challenges – as so many survivors of genocide do all over the world – remains the primary motivation for the work of Global Youth Connect.

In addition to this anniversary, one other element made this delegation unique: it was our most international group ever, with participants from Asia, Africa, Europe and North America, joining with Bosnian youth. This diversity added a great deal to the transformative learning of each participant but it was also an opportunity for Bosnians from all sectors to learn from other nations. Exchanges occurred with several Ministers and Ambassadors, artists and activists, political and social leaders, and, most significantly, with Bosnian youth, whose perspectives and ideas are deeply inspiring.

I want to thank all the delegation participants for being such an incredible group! We had an excellent time and I appreciated greatly their interest and engagement, their respect and desire to learn, as well as our fun and laughter. I also want to thank the Bosnian youth, especially those from Sanski Most, who joined us either in their town or travelling around the country, as they have indeed become the best ambassadors for their country. These young people are privileged to be part of the Center for Peacebuilding and I shall remain forever grateful to Vahidin and Mevludin for welcoming us into their community, where the world can learn how to build genuine peace, step by step, all around a wounded country.

Finally, special thanks to delegate Rowena Teall and GYC staff, for compiling this report, ensuring that the delegation’s experiences – so difficult to describe in words – are captured for their own posterity and for the future participants in our programs. I hope to see some of the returning delegates – and many new faces – in Bosnia, summer 2016!

Until then,
Miki
A note from the editor (and a delegate)...

Rowena Teall

The GYC Conflict Resolution Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina is not volunteer tourism. This program goes far deeper, seeking to build networks of youth activists across the world who will work together to find ways to break cycles of conflict, spread human rights norms and foster peaceful international, interreligious and intercultural communication. Participants were offered an invaluable introduction to conflict resolution, gaining knowledge and experience from the international level down to the smallest grassroots initiatives.

We were incredibly lucky to have such a fantastic program director, supporting GYC team and Bosnian partners to work with throughout the trip. Their enthusiasm, insight and compassion made this delegation into even more of a fantastic experience; the people involved in this project are what makes GYC unique. Because of them, participants were able to meet and learn from so many incredible individuals that are fighting to save Bosnia’s future.

Below, you will find contributions from this year’s participants, sharing their reflections on their amazing experiences throughout the trip. We hope that future participants reading this report will be inspired by our experiences to get involved with GYC’s programs and push for sustainable, positive peace around the world!

The experience is not to be missed. I personally have already benefitted a great deal from the learning and other opportunities afforded by the GYC experience. My experience in Bosnia-Herzegovina helped me secure an internship with HART immediately following the program. Moreover, I know that the experience will stay with me forever, and inform my work around the world and, perhaps, back in BiH as well!

Hvala! (Thanks!)

Rowena
Itinerary Overview...

- Arrival and orientation.

- Three day trip to Sanski Most, including: workshops and hands on voluntary work with the Centre for Peacebuilding; a visit to Vahadin’s village; a visit to the international commission for missing persons; and a community iftar dinner organised by CIM.

- Srebrenica Commemoration – 20th anniversary (10 – 12 July).

- Meetings in Sarajevo, with:
  - Ministry of Human Rights;
  - Ministry of Defense;
  - Parliament member;
  - ICTY outreach office;
  - Tarik Samarah Gallery;
  - National Gender Agency;
  - UNDP BiH; Atlantic Initiative;
  - Ministry of Security;
  - U.S. Embassy;
  - OSCE;
  - Bosnjacki Institut;
  - Small Steps NGO;
  - USAID; and
  - the European Union.

- Visit to Mostar, including mayoral candidate Amna Popovac

- Wrap up session and departures.
Week One
Sanski Most, 7 - 9 July

*Comments from: Wasay Rasool*

Over a very short period of time, our group came to appreciate the northwestern city of Sanski Most a great deal. After arriving in Sanski Most, we were greeted by our program hosts and their volunteers onsite from the Center for Peacebuilding (CIM-Centar Za Izgradnju Mira) in Sanski Most. Vahidin Omanovic and Mevludin Rahmanović have worked on the Center for Peacebuilding since the mid 2000s. They both shared harrowing stories of their personal experiences with the conflict that shaped their formative years. He spoke with us about how valuable the work of CIM was for Sanski Most and the region but made it clear that heavy tensions still existed in the areas where he works.

After several years of holding private events, the Muslim, Orthodox, and Catholic leadership and communities came to support their work and slowly political support followed. Two students from Sanski Most joined our delegation and over two days we discussed several topics regarding our experience.

*Comments from: Yumna Mohamed on CIM’s Interreligious Choir*

Whilst partnered with CIM, we learnt about the Center for Peacebuilding's inter-religious choir in Sanski Most. The founders, imams Mevludin Rahmanovic and Vahidin Omanovic explained to us how their efforts to create dialogue between various religious and ethnic groups are often met with suspicion. Art is the last remaining common thread and the only way to build trust among people who have so profoundly lost it.
Srebrenica has always been a chilling word to hear. As a Bosnian, or more politically accurate a Bosniak, Srebrenica was the shared collective memory and identity of our people. It was the prime example of our victimhood, of our suffering. The lives lost July 1995 in Srebrenica will never be forgotten and they never should be. This year marked the 20th commemoration of the Srebrenica Genocide. But rather than discussing the politics that overtook every news outlet both before and after the commemoration, I would like to share the most eye opening I experienced. Coming to Srebrenica for the first time I knew that I would become emotional because I do identify with all those who suffered and lost their lives. Yet, I did not expect myself to become as angry as I had. I became angry with the international community for not preventing for what happened, at the Serbs for what they had done, and mostly at myself for feeling this hatred. I needed someone to help me make sense of my emotions. Luckily, someone did.

Our delegation was privileged to have the opportunity to meet with one of the members of the Association of Mothers of Srebrenica: Zumra Sehemerovic. This was shortly after the 156 coffins of victims to be buried this year arrived at the cemetery. Emotions were already built up. There we all stood, soaking in each and every word spoken by Zumra. For a woman who lost so much, she talked with such grace and calmness. I was touched and moved while listening to her, as were the other members of our delegation. Her story filled my eyes with tears. Her strength brought out my weakness. Her comfort provided me with hope. Zumra represented the perfect face of humanity; even though she had faced hardship and heartache in her life, she evoked compassion and love instead of hate. And this is exactly the kind of voices that must be heard for this country to heal. For hate brings nothing but hostility and division.
Week Two

Sarajevo

Week two of the delegation was spent in Sarajevo, holding seminars, meetings and workshops with various organisations and agencies. We were joined by Marie, from the GYC Board of Directors, who contributed her substantial knowledge and skills to our daily activities.

Comments from: Yumna Mohamed on Zana Marjanavic

On our first day of meetings in Sarajevo, we spoke with actress-turned-MP Zana Marjanovic who told us about the amateur cabaret she founded in her father’s bar during the war where the infamous Sarajevan sense of humor gave way to satire that was often met with suspicion and annoyance, even by the bar’s regular patrons. She also spoke about the double-edged sword of her success. She is in an interesting position since she continues to act while pursuing her political goals and while she is very keen to engage as many people as possible, she has to be wary of interest groups who want to capitalize on her fame. And yet she still struggles to find funding for the arts today as she did during wartime, which makes me wonder much value is placed on film and arts as a lucrative industry for the country. I’ve spoken to young Bosnians who don’t watch Bosnian and Serbian films because the content is too often war-related.

Comments from: Wasay Rasool on the Ministry of Defence

For our second meeting, we moved across the city to the BiH Defense Ministry and met with Minister Marina Pendes. She gave us an overview of her larger vision for the relatively young Ministry as it completes its tenth year and highlighted that one of her top priorities was developing a culture of transparency. When asked about the level of cooperation in the military at the different entity levels she made it clear that there were no shortcomings in the command structure and that cooperation was strong. The Minister explained that while her office does take measures to engage the public, her primary concern was maintaining an effective capacity that could be mobilized when necessary in accordance with Bosnian Defense Law. After the Dayton Peace Accords, BiH was one of the only countries from the region that was functioning with two separate defense ministries in the Federation and the Republika Srpska. In 2003, the Defense Reform Commission reached a decision to pave the way forward for a state level Defense Ministry, Joint Staff, and Operational Command. Ten years on, the Ministry is under a different administration facing nuanced challenges as it attempts to address domestic issues while working towards a successful NATO accession process.

Comments from: Wasay Rasool on the Ministry of Security

Our meeting with the Ministry of Security provided an overview of the policing apparatus of the BiH state. The major issue that the Ministry representatives highlighted was that they were in the process
of consolidating resources in order to establish a more comprehensive monitoring capacity. We were given a review from all the major departments including protection and rescue, protection of classified information, counter-terrorism, and border security. A map of the institutional structure of the ministry, though complicated, outlined the areas where more work was needed. Another issue discussed was response to emergency aid situations like the massive flooding in the region in 2014. The representatives pointed to the fact that while they were able to acquire data about the flood situation, they found that they did not have the resources to mobilize resources quickly enough to prevent damage/protect citizens that could have happened if more funding was able to monitor the situation in real time and allocate people and aid to the right place at the right time.

Comments from: Yumna Mohamed on International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
One of the most eye-opening meetings of our first day was with ICTY liaison Almir Alić who began by presenting the basic facts. With two years to go before the tribunal closes its doors, it has thus far indicted 161 people for serious violations of international humanitarian law with 147 proceedings concluded and 14 still ongoing, including that of Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadžić.

Alić made a point of explaining that while the ICTY focuses on trying high profile and senior individuals, the tribunal has also played an important role in promoting the rule of law in local jurisdictions as well as being a platform for providing and gathering evidence in cases that can be tried in this context. What struck me about Alić was that he seemed to share my frustration with the process of trying and convicting the criminals of the war in Bosnia. One of the first things he expressed very passionately was his regret that while many victims are either still missing or living and dying with the consequences of the war, a lot of the perpetrators continue to live among them or relatively comfortably in detention awaiting trial. Is this sufficient punishment? Alić also emphasized the importance of individual guilt, which I think is a significant point for future generations.

Comments from: Yumna Mohamed on Tarik Samarah
Another very disarming moment on this trip for me was when we met photographer Tarik Samarah who graciously hosted us at his gallery where he was exhibiting his photos of the aftermath in Srebrenica. Samarah pointedly explained that he approached his work not as a documentarian but as an artist, with each photo playing an important role in anchoring his aesthetic depiction of life after a traumatic event. Samarah was positively ethereal and we all listened breathlessly as he talked about the key to his art, which is to let the suffering of his subjects become his suffering. This compassion is important for his own personal development too, as it keeps his ego in check.

**Atlantic Initiative**

*Comments from: Emily Walter on the Atlantic Initiative*

For one of our mid-week meetings we were fortunate enough to have it in a patisserie with a wide selection of Bosnian cakes. Yum! All treats aside, we were about to have an informal chat with Maida Ćehajić about the work that Atlantic Initiative is doing in Bosnia. Maida Ćehajić works on the Gender and Justice Reform in Bosnia and Herezgovina Project. She works closely alongside police officers and soldiers to limit prejudices in society and encourage a fairer balance between genders. She also supports victims of domestic violence or those from wartime rape camps who may now face discrimination, or have been ostracised, from their communities. The work that Atlantic Initiative does is crucial to empower women in Bosnia and Herzegovina and we were thrilled to hear such a passionate young lady stand up for the importance of women's rights.

For more information on the work of Atlantic Initiative, please see:

http://www.atlanticinitiative.org/about-us/ai-team.html

*Comments from: Wasay Rasool on the US Embassay*

The delegation visited the US Embassy in the middle of the week in Sarajevo and it provided an opportunity to hear from US representatives what the role of the US is and should be in BiH. We met a representative from USAID and the US Ambassador Maureen Cormack. Our delegation highlighted the biggest issues that we had identified in our previous meetings such as corruption amongst older politicians and competing histories and economic limitations for the younger generation. We discussed together the USAID projects that are in place to address the economic infrastructure in BiH but the representatives agreed that changing a culture of corruption is a task that will take time and requires providing economic incentives to avoid corrupt policies and strict consequences should leaders be involved. The embassy sponsors scholarships and educational programs but as the Bosnian students in our group pointed out to the
representatives, a sustainable future for the state requires the younger generation to have more opportunities than they currently see for themselves in Bosnia.

Comments from: Yumna Mohamed of “A Perfect Circle”
“A Perfect Circle” is a Bosnian film about a writer who remains in Sarajevo during the siege while his family flees, and he subsequently finds himself taking care of two orphaned boys. This film was the most experimental and poetic depiction of the war that I have seen and, since it was made shortly after the war, we got a very realistic idea of that landscape of Sarajevo and could make comparisons to how it looks now, making it a very authentic and haunting experience for us.

Comments from: Wasay Rasool on Bošnjački Institut
Our visit to the Bošnjački Institut was a great opportunity to engage BiH from a cultural and artistic perspective. Beyond the gates of the building, we walked into a courtyard which was surrounded by the museum, a modern building to the right hand side converging upon a 16th century Turkish hammam on the left. The director of the institute and her colleague gave us a tour of both parts of the museum. In the hammam there were many pieces of antique Turkish furniture and large prints of decrees granted for land operations during Ottoman influence. Inside the museum, we saw a rare books collection including texts of the Qur'an and a lineage book of the Prophet Muhammad's family. There is a collection of oriental manuscripts that dates to the 13th century, much of which is original work donated by families in and around Bosnia. The institute’s library holds a large collection, especially concerning the Bosnian War time period.

Comments from: Wasay Rasool on European Union
Our group’s meeting with representatives from the Delegation of the European Union to BiH was a late addition to our activities in Sarajevo. They had heard about our meetings with ministries and international organizations and provided an opportunity for our delegation to meet with them and ask questions about a central incentivizing factor for so many of the policies and operations of the
state administration in BiH. It is evident that, at the international level, one reason for addressing a traumatic past in the states of the former Yugoslavia is that the ‘stability’ that comes with that process serves as an antecedent for current EU accession goals. However, as to the question of when BiH will see the end of the journey and become a member of the EU, there is no clear answer. One of the Bosnian members of our delegation asked the EU spokesperson directly when he thought the process would succeed. The spokesperson’s diplomatic answer reaffirmed that while both sides wanted to see BiH enter the EU successfully, across a variety of metrics including labor market reforms and corruption, BiH was falling short of the mark. Though the EU representatives made it evident that their mission was more to monitor than influence, it was interesting to hear the restrictions they were working with in terms of the accession process.

Comments from: Wasay Rasool on OSCE
The OSCE’s mission in BiH was a result of a mandate through the Dayton Peace Accords in which they were tasked with overseeing the first post-war elections, protecting human rights, and working towards regional stabilization. OSCE’s current mission began its work in December 1995 and as it approaches the end of its twentieth year, the representatives we spoke with illustrated how the organization’s role had changed. Apart from its head office in Sarajevo, OSCE has nine field offices around the country and a presence in many places that other organizations do not. This is a legacy of the mission which in the years following the war established field offices in many more locations around the country including and especially tense communities. Today as part of its stabilization strategy, their goals were twofold; they monitor security situations around the country and promote educational reform. In terms of security, OSCE collects data and actively engages the citizenry in raising awareness about security threats such as hate crimes. They have developed a program, Coalition or Citizens Against Hate, which allows individuals to anonymously provide information about violent or inflammatory incidents related to hate crimes. OSCE verifies this information independently and adds the information to a Super Citizens infographic database (started in 2013) that shows what is happening in each locality. The OSCE representatives really seemed to value the work they had accomplished in communities and there was a legitimate sense of civil society building on the ground. However, the representatives were quick to point out that deterrence of violent/damaging incidents was not a guarantee and that while BiH has grown and stabilized in many ways in the time that OSCE mission has been there, the motives behind hate crimes are still deeply rooted in certain factions of BiH and that they pose a serious threat to security when they become violent.

Comments from: Wasay Rasool on OSCE
Conference: ISSS 2015
Through our connections with the OSCE, our delegation was able to spend one of our last days in Sarajevo at a conference on transforming legal systems with students from different parts of Europe. As part of the International Summer School in Sarajevo 2015 (sponsored by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Pravnik
Association) our morning with the law students in their conference held a discussion on the role of international human rights courts in institution building. Though our delegation had a few law students, the conference provided an opportunity to speak with students in Europe who are directly grappling with the institutional framework that exists around the rights and protections that all individuals should have. Many of them were interested in post-conflict societies and were interested to hear about the situation in the ministries and at the grassroots level in BiH that we had learned about in our time there.

Comments from Rowena Teall on Moving forward for BiH

In our final debriefing session, the participants shared their experiences and knowledge from the trip and collaborated on suggestions for further conflict resolution within the country.

- **Greater steps could be taken to encourage the Bosnian diaspora to invest in BiH, both economically and in terms of awareness raising and reconciliation initiatives.**

- **Tackle apathetic and de-incentivised youth.** From our interactions with Bosnian youth around the country, we were told and could see that although the youth are frustrated with the political stagnation and nationalist rhetoric within the country they feel disempowered, unheard and unable to make substantial change.

- **The teaching of three separate ethnic narratives within schools is extremely damaging for Bosnian relations.** Although peacebuilders may find it difficult to tackle this at a policy level, due to the stagnating political system, initiatives to counter these narratives could be carried out at a
local level. Carefully planned, sustainable inter-youth dialogue projects in the style of Mostar’s ‘Perspektiva’ program could yield positive results.

- The middle generation, those that lived through the conflict, cannot be neglected. INGOs, NGOs and CSOs working on reconciliation in Bosnia should seek to engage this generation in trust building activities such as community dialogue or cross-cultural community projects.

- Address and include ‘the other’ ethnicities in the political system – granting them a voice and engaging this very significant portion of the population.

- The BiH Embassies around the world should take a greater role in promoting Bosnia and keeping it on the international agenda.

- The EU has the opportunity and the power to push for larger and faster political reform through the Bosnian accession program.

- From our meetings with the OSCE, we saw evidence that their Community Action Plan program had been successful in encouraging sustainable integration and trust in some areas.

- A creation of neutral memorial spaces where the suffering of the nation as a whole can be commemorated could allow acknowledgement to take place in a de-politicised manner.

- Linking all of these projects, for example backing local level change with policy change at the national level, will be the only way to create systematic, sustainable change for the entire country.
**Who came on the trip?**

### Delegates

**Amal Said Ali Al Mashayakh**

Amal is a Cyber Security training and awareness specialist at Oman Computer Emergency Readiness Team (OCERT), she is also managing a national Child Online Protection program in her country, Oman. She earned her Bachelor of Science (BSc), Computer Science degree from Sultan Qaboos University in 2010. Since then, she has participated in different youth and community development programs, such as: VSO Youth Global Xchange program (the UK, Oman & Yemen), UNESCO Youth forum, Microsoft Imagine Cup, and Arab Youth Exchange program (Jordan & Palestine). Besides that, she works with local NGOs on humanitarian causes like women development, Children rights, and issues like education, health and poverty. Although Amal's earlier education and career was all about Information Technology and communication, she is now more into cultural and religious tolerance, community development projects and event management. By participating in the Conflict Resolution Delegation to Bosnia, Amal wants to learn Conflict Resolution skills and understand the theory in practice. She is, also, very interested to discover a rich historical and cultural heritage region as Bosnia. Currently, Amal is a part time International Relations and Security Studies postgraduate student enrolled in a three year Master program at Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat.

**Pinar Gıl**

Pinar is a second year law student at the University of Ottawa in Canada, with an interest in Public International Law and Democratic Governance. She is concurrently a graduate student at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (NPSIA) at Carleton University, specializing in Intelligence and National Security. In 2012, Pinar received her Combined Honours BA in French and Political Science from the University of Windsor, where she pursued a part of her studies in Lyon, France. Pinar has since participated in national and international competitions like the Carleton Model NATO Conference (2012-2014) and, most recently, the Clara Barton International Humanitarian Law Moot (2015), where her team successfully took home the win for Canada. As a Turkish-Canadian, Pinar is thrilled for the opportunity to participate in the GYC Bosnia delegation, and is interested in seeing how modern Balkan identity has been shaped by its turbulent past. Finally, she looks forward to collaborating with her fellow GYC delegates in their pursuit to gaining a deeper understanding of the post-conflict challenges faced by Bosnians today. Upon graduation, Pinar hopes to practice law in Canada, with future aspirations on working internationally.

**Pembroke King**

Pembroke is an undergraduate at Endicott College in Beverly, MA studying International Affairs. Pembroke first discovered her passion for cross-cultural dialogue as a student ambassador to Japan with People to People. Her passion for aiding disadvantaged communities stems from her experience as a volunteer with the Remember Foundation and the holidays she spent with her family’s roots up to the international policy level. After graduating from Durham, Pembroke hopes to begin her career within the youth-oriented organizations she has been involved in to promote best practices through shared learning and monitoring and evaluation. Pembroke’s post-program blog post is “Sarajevo: A Paradox Embodied.”

**Yumna Mohamed**

Yumna Mohamed is a journalist and aspiring writer and stand-up comedian based in Johannesburg, South Africa. Coming from a country that is still undergoing post-apartheid transition with cracks in the “Rainbow Nation” beginning to show, indicates to her that a lot more needs to be done to accomplish true reconciliation. Yumna is therefore participating in this program to see how this is being handled in another part of the world. She is also very much interested in the role literature and the arts can play in post-conflict transformation. At press time, Yumna had written two post-program blog posts: “In Separateness, A Quiet Anger Grows” and “The Art of Reconciliation.”

**Wasay Rasool**

Wasay will be the final semester of his undergraduate career at Indiana University Bloomington studying Political Science and Economics this upcoming fall. On campus he is especially involved with a growing Oxfam Club and the university’s Sustainability Council. Last summer he worked for political polling/consulting firm, Penn Schoen and Berland, working on public opinion research design and data analysis. He plans on attending law school in the fall of 2016 and working abroad in Pakistan starting in January. As part of the Bosnia delegation, he hopes to learn more about transitional justice in relation to institutional reform and how it operates at different scales.

**Rowena Teall**

Rowena is a postgraduate student at Durham University in the UK, studying for an MSc in Defence, Development and Diplomacy. She completed her undergraduate degree in 2014 at the University of Exeter in Politics and French. She has always been fascinated by conflict resolution and over time has come to develop an especial interest in humanitarian work; she is currently writing her masters thesis on programs which aim to prevent and respond to gender based violence in humanitarian crises. By participating in GYC’s conflict resolution delegation to Bosnia, Rowena hopes to learn more about how the gendered perspective can inform successful peacebuilding, including improving transitional justice mechanisms and reconciliation initiatives for victims of conflict. She is really looking forward to gaining practical experience with the CSOs and NGOs that work with the youth of Bosnia on achieving sustainable peace and to see first hand the complexities of the post-conflict process, from the grass roots up to the international policy level. After graduating from Durham, Rowena hopes to begin her career within the humanitarian sector, working in particular on promoting best practices through shared learning and monitoring and evaluation. Rowena is one of the editors/compilers of this program report. Thanks Rowena!

**Emily Walter**

Emily is a LLB (Hons) law graduate now studying MSc Defence, Development and Diplomacy at Durham University, UK. Emily recently returned from a field trip to Lebanon where she conducted interviews and met with various representatives from political groups, the United Nations, journalists and academics. The themes of study were the security development nexus, post conflict reconstruction and intra-sectarian reconciliation as well as the impact of political participation on militant groups. Emily is interested in the flow of migrants and their subsequent claims to asylum and refugee status. She has a keen interest in International Humanitarian Law particularly having written her undergraduate dissertation on the protections offered to Prisoners of War. For the Bosnian conflict resolution delegation, she is looking forward to engaging with the Bosnian youth and volunteering for the NGOs whilst increasing her understanding and awareness of this conflict affected region. Emily’s post-program blog is entitled: “Can one compare Bosnia and Lebanon?”

**Renee Wilkinson**

Renee is completing her Undergraduate Degree in International Development in Melbourne, Australia. She will be pursuing a Masters Degree in Peace and Conflict Studies in 2016. Having participated in Global Youth Connect’s Human Rights program in Rwanda in 2012, Renee was motivated to participate in Bosnia’s conflict resolution program to get specific interest in how post-conflict societies recover and reconcile after both personal and collective trauma caused by mass violence. She would like to gain skills from the program that assist her in becoming an effective and holistic peace-building practitioner.

**Amela Zukic**

Amela is a recent graduate from the University of Washington, Seattle, WA. She currently has a degree in international studies, and a minor in global health. She has been accepted to the University of Washington Law School, where she will begin her attendance starting in autumn of 2015. Her focus will be on International and Comparative Law after which Amela hopes to pursue a career in policy work, advocating for human rights. By participating in the Bosnia-Herzegovina Conflict Resolution Delegation, Amela hopes to gain skills and knowledge that will help her understand and prevent conflict in order to become a better human rights activist and lawyer.
Local Participants in the Delegation

Ammar Zeljković is an English Language student at the University of Sarajevo. He finished the gymnasium in Sanski Most where he grew up. During that time he has been an active volunteer at CIM where he got interested in human right issues, transitional justice, peacebuilding, reconciliation and conflict resolution. By participating in GYC’s Conflict Resolution Delegation to Bosnia his aim was to learn more about political barriers that prevent Bosnia and Herzegovina from further developing on the economical and social levels. Ammar’s post-program blog post ”My country still at war” can be found at GYCVillage.org

Imran Unkić

Program Staff

Mirsad "Miki" Jacevic
Program Director, Bosnia
Global Youth Connect

Miki is a human rights activist and peace program specialist from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Hercegovina. He is a co-founder of Global Youth Connect has organized and led GYC programs in Bosnia for the last ten years. In addition, Miki works full-time as a deputy director at the Institute for Inclusive Security where he oversees policy efforts aimed at including civil society representatives in formal and informal peace processes. Before the war in Bosnia, Miki headed the UN Youth Chapter and was president of the local committee of AIESEC, the largest student association in the world. During the war, he was involved in numerous projects to ease the suffering of youth and the elderly. In 1994, he founded and directed Collegium Bosniacum, an organization of Bosnian students in Europe. Out of the work grew the initiative, Academic Lifeline for Bosnia Hercegovina, which aimed at rebuilding the country’s academic institutions. In 1995, Miki headed the Vienna office of the World University Service, dealing with education issues in troubled regions. During this time, he also lived and worked in South Africa, Northern Ireland, Palestine, and Central American countries. Miki has consulted with many conflict resolution organizations, including Search for Common Ground, where he led efforts to develop child soldiers programs. He has led several delegations of international activists and conflict resolution practitioners to various post-conflict settings, including the Balkans, Northern Ireland, South Africa and Guatemala. Miki holds a Master of Science degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University, where he is currently a doctoral student. He teaches in the Conflict Transformation Across Cultures Program, (CONTACT) Summer Peace building Institute at the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. He is married to Guatemalan human rights activist Eva Morales, and they live with their two children in the Washington, DC area.

Jesse Hawkes
Executive Director
Global Youth Connect

Jesse is a human rights activist, researcher, and youth development programmer, as well as a professional actor/singer, and theatre director/writer. Jesse has served as GYC's Executive Director since 2009, and has also been GYC’s Rwanda Program director since 2007, organizing several human rights learning and action youth summits per year in collaboration with local Rwandan partner organizations, promoting the human rights of numerous groups such as youth, survivors of genocide, historically marginalized peoples (indigenous peoples), LGBT persons, women, and refugees. Before working with GYC, and having worked on youth and arts projects in Haiti and in South Africa, Jesse co-led an HIV prevention program for over sixty Rwandan high schools and their communities, utilizing interactive theatre methods and outreach activities conducted in collaboration with local associations of people living with HIV. He also participated in various films shot in Rwanda, such as Sometimes in April, Shake Hands with the Devil, and Beyond the Gates. Jesse re-located to NYC in 2010, where he built Global Youth Connect’s Human Rights in the USA Program, collaborated with Global Kids on USAID’s American Youth Leadership Program in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and serves as editor of GYC’s blog (gycvillage.org). Jesse has consulted with international NGOs such as the Global AIDS Alliance and Population Services International and is a member of Actors’ Equity, having performed with companies such as the American Repertory Theater and the Williamstown Theatre Festival. He holds a BA in History from Harvard University.
This report was created collaboratively by delegation participants.
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