GLOBAL YOUTH CONNECT

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

ENGAGEMENT IN THE WORLD, OF THE WORLD, FOR THE WORLD.
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

2018 has been an exciting year as Global Youth Connect (GYC) continues to promote human rights and serve youth around the corner, and around the world. By the time you read this, I will have stepped down as Executive Director of GYC.

Over the past three years, I've received an invaluable education from my colleagues at this organization. Tuition, I've learned, comes in many forms. It comes from opportunities to work with, and learn from, change agents in places like Colombia and Rwanda. Last year, I had the privilege of joining a GYC Rwanda delegation and was able to witness firsthand the sort of inner transformation that takes place over the course of the program. Tuition also comes from working with board members and donors and people who believe in our mission. It comes from success, which we've had a lot of. It also comes from knowing the work is not yet finished.

The person stepping into this role is Dechen Albero who I am confident will lead the organization effectively and with compassion.

GYC has always been bigger than a single person. At its core, GYC is an idea; an idea that young people can, with support, change the course of events and make this world a more just, equitable place for all who inhabit it.

With gratitude for your support,
Jason Torreano
Executive Director
MESSAGE FROM THE INCOMING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As a former volunteer, program participant and board member, I am thrilled to be selected as Global Youth Connect's next executive director. Since 1999, GYC's mission has focused on igniting human rights learning and cultural exchange in post-conflict countries around the world with the aim of preventing mass atrocities. In an increasingly polarized and fractured world, I believe this mission is even more vital today. I am honored to begin working toward realizing GYC's promise of a more socially just and equitable world.

Over the last year, GYC has experienced many successes. These include continued program offerings in Colombia (winter and summer), our flagship program in Rwanda, as well as the first-ever delegation to South Africa. New board members and in-country program staff have invigorated the organization and helped establish partnerships with Aegis Trust and Justice Travel that increase GYC’s footprint and enable us to better serve local populations. Most importantly, a new articulation agreement with Warren Wilson College allows us to offer academic credit for our programs and recognizes the academic rigor and value of our programs.

The coming year presents new opportunities as well as some challenges for GYC. We will continue programming in Colombia and Rwanda while further developing our South Africa program and working to build new options in Europe and the Americas with a focus on migration and refugee rights. Recognizing cost as the foremost factor inhibiting US students from studying abroad, we will work to build a scholarship fund to increase access for low-income and first-generation college students as well as underrepresented populations. Finally, we aim to continue engaging new stakeholders in our work and identify new collaborators.

Your support throughout the years has played a vital role in GYC's growth and success. As we look toward 2019 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 Albera, MPhil., MA, RPCV
Executive Director
COLOMBIA PROGRAM OVERVIEW

JANUARY 2018 DELEGATION

The January 2018 Delegation to Colombia offered participants a unique insight into the country’s complex human rights context as it navigates the historic peace accords with the FARC after more than 52 years of armed conflict. The delegation took place across the capital (Bogotá), Cali in Valle del Cauca, and Santander de Quilichao in Cauca - one of the regions still most heavily affected by the conflict.

Delegates had the opportunity to hear first hand accounts from a range of protagonists in the process, from state entities to grassroots community organizations focused on indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and LGBTQ rights. Through these meetings and a series of workshops, delegates explored in-depth several core themes: the history and diverse narratives of the conflict, the details of the current peace process and how it compares with previous peace-building efforts in the country, and the critical human rights challenges facing Colombia in the implementation of the peace accords.
COLOMBIA PROGRAM OVERVIEW

JULY 2018 DELEGATION

The Global Youth Connect July 2018 Delegation to Colombia went to Bogotá and Cali to gain an understanding of the complex history of Colombia’s long-running civil conflict and the prospects for the future. The delegation met with state entities, NGOs, international organizations, and grassroots community organizations, gaining diverse perspectives about human rights issues in Colombia. Our focus for this delegation was on the links between civil society and the state. We examined how institutional policies affect local organizations and communities, and how the rhetoric of state agencies and community organizations often differs. We applied a critical lens to the study of the conflict and ongoing peace process, and because of the intimate nature of the delegation we were able to delve into each delegate’s particular research interests.

It was an especially interesting time to partake in these discussions, as Colombia had recently voted in a new president, casting doubt on the future of peace in the country and presenting challenges for many of the organizations we met with. The delegates gained knowledge and skills to help them continue to analyze the peace process and human rights issues, both in the Colombian context and internationally.
PARTNERSHIP WITH WARREN WILSON COLLEGE

Global Youth Connect (GYC) is proud to partner with Warren Wilson College to offer undergraduate academic credit for human rights and peacebuilding delegations. The first delegates to receive academic credit through this arrangement were GYC Colombia delegates in summer 2018.

Warren Wilson College acts as the official School of Record following the January 2018 signing of a memorandum of understanding between the two institutions. Warren Wilson College started as the Asheville Farm School in 1894, became a coed junior college in 1942, and transitioned to the four-year Warren Wilson College in the mid 1960s. Warren Wilson College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award Bachelors of Arts, Bachelors of Science and Masters of Fine Arts degrees.

"The work that delegates put in to GYC programming is rigorous and relevant to many academic paths, so we’re very pleased that we can provide transcripts to program participants." said Jason Torreano, Executive Director.
#GYC COLOMBIA

[Images of groups of people, scenes, and text in Spanish: "que la paz no nos cueste la vida."]
Whenever I am asked to speak about my experience with Global Youth Connect I often struggle to find the words adequate enough to express my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation for the experience and opportunities afforded to me by GYC.

As a former intern, and current recruiter, I have been fortunate enough to use my experience as a human rights delegate (GYC Colombia, March 2016 and GYC Rwanda, August 2016) to both inform my own professional development and encourage passionate, dedicated students all over the globe to become the next generation of GYC alumni; and join our mission of advancing human rights in a post conflict world.

By educating students about the importance of human rights, GYC affords young leaders the chance to become agents of change in their local communities by emphasizing the importance and impact of self awareness, social justice, and compassion for a global community.

The long lasting influence of my experience as a GYC delegate is demonstrated both in my scholastic endeavors and continued commitment to weaving these experiences into a career in social justice and community engagement.

I feel very fortunate to have crossed paths with Global Youth Connect. It is an experience I will carry with me always and I am honored to be part of the GYC team.
Global Youth Connect 2017 was one of the best moments I ever had in life. Meeting with people from different backgrounds and across the world has been a golden gift. I was blessed to meet with the people from Rwanda, a country that has experienced genocide a few times and lost a great number of people. Despite that, they still could accommodate many other people who were seeking refuge including my family for about 20 years now.

I enjoyed the visits we made to different places including the memorial, a place that has millions of bodies who were killed during the 1994 genocide; which helped teach about how a world with and without human rights may look like. I was blessed to share my experience of life in the refugee camp and how we ended up there for about 20 years.

It all started with the cease fire by the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the political party in power today in Rwanda that chased the genocidal militia into the Democratic Republic of Congo. Arriving there, they tried to do the same things that happened in Rwanda, where they killed a big number of people and the survivors fled to the neighboring country, Rwanda. With a lot of orphans and widows, we crossed the border and made it to Rwanda. We were still under tension, since the first days of our arrival, the same militia crossed the border and killed hundreds of people. That was the main reason of moving us away from the border and putting us in a place that was our home for about 20 years and which is still a home for thousands today.

In 2017, after all of the struggles, everything was brought to an end. I surprisingly was called to go for the final step of the resettlement process which was quicker than ever. I was about to find a place that I can call a home, or that I belong to. Now, I have hit my first year in USA, I enjoy the life since it is by far much more different. We are free to work and make money, we can buy whatever we want, and we are not treated as refugees anymore. When it comes to human rights, USA has taken a significant step as the law is the ruling point.
NEW PARTNERSHIPS IN RWANDA

In summer 2018, GYC started working on formalizing the cooperation with Aegis Trust Rwanda and STAND. 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.

The Aegis Trust mission is to work towards the prediction, prevention and ultimate elimination of genocide. We do this primarily through research, education and the dissemination of information and advice.

STAND: The Student-Led Movement to End Mass Atrocities believes that, given the opportunity, young people are uniquely positioned to react to emerging crises and take the lead on cutting-edge campaigns, grassroots organizing, peer education, and dialogue facilitation. STAND aims to foster an international community resistant to mass atrocities through the promotion of education, awareness, and critical thinking; provide spaces for youth to respond to current human rights issues through the use of informed and responsible advocacy on local and global levels; and build the next generation of global thought leaders through experiential leadership development and skills training.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in September 2018 and represents willingness of involved parties to work together on human rights and peace education promotion initiatives. The first joint program should be launched in winter 2018/2019. At the moment, the cooperation is based on GYC’s leadership with Aegis Trust and STAND’s support in regard to logistics, recruitment and peace education module provision. If successful, all parties involved expressed their enthusiasm to continue working together in the future.
GYC held a wine tasting fundraiser **October 18 at Taste Wine Company** in Manhattan.

During the **third annual event, several dozen people** came out to learn more about the organization while sipping on wine from around the globe and enjoying snacks courtesy of Trader Joe’s.

Throughout the space, guests could look at materials from past delegations as well as letters written by past GYC delegates on their **experience with GYC programs**.

“This wine tasting **has grown on people** over the years,” said Jason Torreano, Executive Director. “Each year, it **allows us to share our work** around the world and **meet people** in New York City who may be interested in supporting our mission.”

**More than $1,000 was raised to support GYC programs.**
South Africa - August 2019

Join GYC and escape for an exciting, inspiring trip to warm, sunny South Africa in 2019. Travel to Cape Town and learn about the legacies of apartheid following the struggles of the African National Congress to gain independence. Learn from inspiring human rights activists, immerse fully in local culture, and enrich and refresh your own chapter of life. This is a rich overseas human rights program in a fascinating country — and more. It’s a unique opportunity for a transformative experience.

Rwanda - January & July 2019

The TURIKUMWE (We are Together) is a program that brings young leaders from Rwanda and from around the world for an intensive two-week program exploring human rights and peace cultivation in a national and international context.

During the course of the program participants come together to explore different notions about human rights and peace education but also to learn more about how to take action to promote peace and genocide prevention worldwide.
Financial Details

2018 Revenue

GIFTS & GRANTS  34,028
PROGRAM REVENUE  17,253
TOTAL REVENUE  51,281

2018 Expenses

Salaries  33,576
Contracting Fees  9,924
Printing Costs  177
Other Expenses  15,440
Total Expenses  57,144
MEET THE BOARD MEMBERS

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YES!

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From: ____________________________
Date: ____________________________

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: __ __/ __ __
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Checks should be made payable to "Global Youth Connect"

Mailed to: Global Youth Connect
PO Box 1342, New York, NY 10159

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