



“Make Some Noise”: Human Rights for the Next Generation

Starting this summer, teenagers in the Hudson Valley region of upstate New York will have a chance to join a growing global movement of youth who are taking action to promote and protect human rights.

This new initiative will be launched in July 2006 through a workshop series for teenagers called “Make Some Noise: Human Rights for the Next Generation.”

Workshops will take place July 17-21 and August 7-11 at GYC’s Kingston, New York office. Through sessions like “Our Lives, Our Rights: What are Human Rights Anyway?” and “What’s Going on Here?: Human Rights in the Hud-

son Valley” students will discuss the meaning and importance of human rights in relation to what is happening in the Hudson Valley as well as at the national level. They will also discuss global issues, such as what they can do about the on-going genocide in Sudan and look at the impact of child labor in developing countries.

There are a lot of young people in the U.S. who want to learn about social justice, human rights and global issues. Some resources exist, but more needs to be done at a local level to support their desire to make a difference.

Youth workshops on different human rights themes will be organized on a year-round basis.

Students will also be invited to participate in weekly discussion and action groups, a forum where local youth can come together to share information and ideas.

GYC also plans to select a group of local students to travel on a human rights delegation to Cambodia in 2007 where they will have an opportunity to learn about the country’s history, join a workshop with students from GYC’s Cambodian partner organization, *Youth for Peace*, and participate in volunteer projects.

Fund It, Do It!: Small Grants to for Youth Projects

A little bit of funding can go a long way in making a difference...

In response to the overwhelming need for additional financial investments in youth projects in our program countries, GYC has established a small grants fund.

By harvesting the power of our collective contributions, we can help support youth in Bosnia, Cambodia, Guatemala and Rwanda.

To jumpstart fundraising, GYC organized a screening of the documentary, “Through My Eyes” in NYC

on April 7th, raising nearly \$3,000 for Rwandan youth.

A private foundation has agreed to match all contributions to the fund made before June 1st.

Grants will be awarded to selected organizations in our program countries.

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Sudan: There’s No Time to Waste

In Darfur, Sudan more than 400,000 have been killed and over 2.5 million displaced. Each day more than 100 people continue to die and 5,000 die every month.

There is no time to waste. Everything we do can help save lives. Speak out, get involved and do more today.

www.savedarfur.org

Who's New @ GYC



Emma

Kreyche is Program Director for Guatemala & El Salvador. She has extensive activism,

community organizing, and training experience and most recently, worked with Justice for Farmworkers and as a community program manager at a local mediation center.

Kelly

Fish joins GYC as Assistant Program Director for Rwanda. Previously,



she worked as a gender based violence project coordinator in Eastern Chad's Darfur refugee camps and in Northern Uganda's internally displaced persons camps. Kelly has also researched methods for incorporating women into peacebuilding efforts in Northern Uganda and worked in Rwanda with the Kigali Urban Commission to Combat AIDS.



Jessie

Gibson will work as a Special Project Assistant for the Cambodia program. After graduating with a degree in English language and literature from the University of Seattle, Jessie taught English to workers in a Nike factory in Thailand and environmental education to Thai and Japanese students. She also participated in GYC's 2005 delegation to Cambodia.

"Being" the Change

Dear Friends,

As Gandhi so wisely said, it is up to us to "be the change we wish to see in the world."

And yet, how many of us have really stopped lately to reflect on the deeper meaning of these words?

There is so much work to be done and never enough time and money to do it. It is easy to get so busy with "the work" that we forget to take time to reflect on our own actions.

I try to regularly stop and ask myself, am I really being the change I wish to see? A lot of times the answer is yes and sometimes it is no. My idea of what change is evolves too, as I learn to see the world in new ways. It is so important for me to remind myself to "be" the work as opposed to "do" the work.

There is a lot of power in Gandhi's words.

For me, being the change in the world means a lot of things. It means respecting other people and respecting myself. It means taking responsibility not only for my own actions but for my inaction. It means working with other people who share similar ideas as me but also working together peacefully with people who are very different. Being the change means empowering others, not taking their power away. It means loving the good and learning from the bad. It means dedication, hard work and selflessness. It means love, non-violence and patience. It means being thankful for what I have and consistently giving to others my time, energy and resources. It means human rights for all of us.

These are some of the things I aspire to be and my hope for the rest of the world.

What does "being the change" mean to you? I'd love to learn from you.

Peace,

jennifer@globalyouthconnect.org



U.S. Alumni Retreat ~ February 2006 Lifebridge Sanctuary ~ Rosendale, NY

Sovathana Ly, Edward Warner, Renzo Cinti, Jessie Gibson, Meredith Hubbell, Christen Dobson, Naomi Neustadt, Marina Moul, Duey Kol, Aja Gair, Alim Chandani, Jennifer Kloes, and Emma Kreyche

GYC Scholarship Winners

Cambodia—Summer 2006

Katie Swartz
Lindsay McNicholas

Bosnia—Summer 2006

Naz Durakoglu
Kristy Smithson

Rwanda—Summer 2006

Alyson Martin
Nikolas Wolfe

Rwanda—January 2006

Roger Wong
Christina Olivares

Mapping Cambodia, Mapping Ourselves

On April 29 and 30, Cambodian alumni gathered for a retreat and workshop in Phnom Penh to meet each other, exchange ideas and help build GYC's alumni action network.

The two-day workshop – “Mapping Cambodia, Mapping Ourselves” -- will focus on the Millennium Development Goals, particularly looking how the MDGs relate to human rights and current conditions in Cambodia.

Cambodian human rights activist Kem Sokha joined the group as a special guest speaker.

“Bombhunters”

Would you risk your life for 9 cents?

Poverty is the main reason driving some Cambodians to search for unexploded bombs, most dropped by the U.S. in the 1970s. In June 2006, GYC is organizing a special screening in Seattle, Washington of this important new film about the long-term consequences of war. All proceeds will benefit Cambodia youth projects.

Apply Today!

Cambodia
Human Rights Delegation
December 27—January 17, 2007

www.globalyouthconnect.org

Youth for Peace (YFP)

A peace and human rights education program for Cambodian youth

www.yfpcambodia.org

Human Rights Celebration Turns Dangerous for Cambodian Activists

In December of 2005, the Cambodian government started to crack down on the activities of human rights activists.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen had recently signed a controversial border agreement with Vietnam. Because the actual agreement was not made public, there was much speculation on its terms and criticism of the government by the people.

Dara Sin, a past participant in GYC's training program in Cambodia who works with the Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP), was one of the people on the organizing committee for International Human Rights Day. The day was a success. There were speeches and a strong show of support from most of the major NGOs and human rights leaders in Cambodia. In the afternoon, there was a concert headlined by one of Cambodia's most popular singers.

Trouble came later when a vehicle carrying a banner with anti-government, anti-Hun Sen comments was stopped. The banner contained comments written by members of the

public not affiliated with any NGO or the organizing body of the day's celebratory activities.

Most of the comments were clearly in response to the supplemental border agreement. The vehicle was detained and Dara was one of the people called in to smooth things over.

From there, things spiraled downwards. Shortly afterwards, several men were arrested in connection to this act including Kem Sokha, the founder to the *Cambodian Center for Human Rights* and Yeng Virak of the *Cambodian Legal Education Center* on charges of defamation.

The government threatened to expand the scope of the arrests to others in connection with International Human Rights Day.

Dara, along with others, were told by different human rights groups that they may be arrested next. So, they went into hiding—not responding to phone calls or e-mails for several weeks.

After much pressure from different human rights organizations and the international community, the arrested men (Kem Sokha and Yeng Virak) were released, but their charges were not dropped.

Luckily, Dara did not get arrested.

The Prime Minister, succumbing to pressure, urged the courts to drop the charges. But, unfortunately, the charges cannot be dropped, so the process is going to be “slowed down” so that the statute of limitations (3 years) will expire on the cases.

Many see this as Prime Minister Hun Sen's way of manipulating the men and controlling their behavior especially with elections coming up in 2008.

All of the men have stated that this will not affect their actions. They will continue to speak out and do human rights work.

**-Navin Moul
Program Director, Cambodia**

Extending an Arm in Hope: One Woman's Mission in Rwanda

There are more children on the street in Rwanda's capital than there are children in all of Boston's public schools. Thousands of children were brutally slaughtered during the genocide, but those who survived face continued trauma. These are children who have endured rape and torture, whose lives may have depended upon hiding beneath the corpses of family members—80% have witnessed the death of a relative. In Kigali alone, 80,000 children struggle to survive on the streets, without food, shelter, or access to education. Across the country, 400,000 children live without one or both parents, alone in the shadow of genocide.

For many Rwandans living in deep poverty, these children are worth nothing more than their labor and property. A common experience for Rwandan orphans is to be taken in by a foster family only to be exploited and mistreated. For these children, fleeing to live on the streets becomes their only alternative. Alone in the cities, they face recurring, forcible removal by municipal authorities seeking to "clean the streets," and girls are frequently raped, sometimes even by law enforcement officials.

For Mutesi Gasana, orphaned at age fifteen, absorbing these statistics and realities without acting is not an option, and she has worked tirelessly to build a brighter future for Rwanda's children since beginning her studies at the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology. Mutesi works as Public Relations and Communication Director of the Sports and Culture for Peace Foundation in the Great Lakes Region as well as serves as a representative on the National Youth Council.

GYC: *Could you tell us about yourself? What experiences in your childhood or youth were important in shaping who you are and the work that you do?*

MG: I was born in 1981 in Tanzania, where my parents had gone in exile in 1959. I attended primary school in Uganda, secondary school in Nairobi and returned to Rwanda in 1996. My father had to join the army in 1990. The genocide ended while I was in Uganda

but some of our family were killed here. In 1996, my father was killed by *Interahamwe* militia. Two weeks after his death, my mother also was killed. I was fifteen. As the first-born, I was left with three brothers and two sisters — my youngest sister was just nine months. However, I had to continue my studies. I joined the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) in 2001 and studied food science and technology. I also joined the unity and reconciliation club at KIST.



GYC: *Could you tell us more about your work?*

MG: In 2002, I was invited to be a gender activist, motivating girls to study technology. I also joined the environment club and was elected to be in charge of seeing how the campus can look better with trees and a healthy environment. In 2003 there were elections of youth councils throughout Rwanda. I was elected through the Commission of Gender to the National Youth Council in Kigali. In 2003, I joined the Sports and Culture for Peace Foundation. I had more interest in the Foundation's work than any other thing I was doing. I had experienced the same experience of being an orphan or being displaced, of being lonely. It really reflected my experi-

ence. They elected me to the public relations position. I was doing all of this while still studying. I graduated in 2004, and continue to work with the Foundation and the Youth Council,

GYC: *What is the most meaningful part of your work?*

MG: I have enjoyed the experience with the Foundation more than any other. After losing my parents my brothers experienced a lot more problems than I did. After the death of my father, I was taken to a relative. I did not have a lot of problems, but my brothers were taken to other homes where they were mistreated. I felt I should take care of other children—that was my force in working for the Foundation.

GYC: *What are your goals? What do you envision for Rwandan youth ten years from now?*

MG: I expect a change in children's rights. I hope to see that children are no longer in the street. I don't expect any kids on the street in ten years.

GYC: *How can Americans, especially youth, help achieve these goals?*

MG: One way is by advocating for street children so they can meet their basic needs. There are two things to do: one, provide their basic needs and two, to talk to the parents, because street kids are from homes. We need good parents who care for the children. We don't need wars.

GYC: *Is there anything else you would like to add?*

MG: People should come and visit Rwanda and get the real experience. When people sit in America, they get different versions of what Rwanda is, but when you come here you can see the problems as they are, and work with us to help solve them.

-Kathryn Berndston & Mutesi Gasana

Justice Needed for Survivors of Katrina

The September 10th edition of the New York Times shows a flooded New Orleans. A photo shows people on rafts, rising water levels and a billboard reading "Welcome to Africa." But what is happening Louisiana is not a problem of the "Third World"; it is a uniquely American problem. We have a responsibility towards those affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. New Orleans was not a natural disaster but a *man-made* disaster exacerbated by the growing gap between the rich and the poor. We are responsible for this problem and we need to do something about it.

Since returning from Rwanda, I have had a hard time focusing on bookwork when it is blatantly clear that there is so much to be done. So I volunteered to conduct a health survey for children and families in Louisiana. The goal is to advocate for specific needs of victims and survivors of the hurricanes and urge the state's health department to follow through on promises already made. People in Louisiana are clearly sick of empty promises and tired of people knocking on doors without offering tangible assistance.

In trailer parks with names like "Harmony" and "Renaissance Park", FEMA has housed victim-survivors in "temporary" housing units. For many, it is their third or fourth residence since the hurricanes and there seems to be little attempt to create alternative infrastructure. The trailers are overcrowded, deteriorating and lacking cooking facilities. Some residents will soon be charged for propane, which many cannot afford. Jobs are located far away. Transportation is limited. Most people don't know where to find services that might help them. Education is rarely happening, as school buses and school systems have failed to deliver.

In New Orleans, FEMA put people up in fancy hotels like the Crown Plaza in the French Quarter. Whole families lived there for months. Ironically, for many it seemed this was the nicest place they had ever lived. On March 1st, eviction came with nowhere to go.

No training can prepare you for how



Responding to an Emerging Health Crisis in Louisiana & Mississippi: Urgent Need for a Health Care "Marshall Plan"
www.ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu/files/marshall_plan.pdf

Other Website Resources

www.justiceforneworleans.org ~ www.katrinaaction.org
www.colorofchange.org

answers to "yes" or "no" questions turn into painful life stories. People are overly emotional or stony, emotionless wrecks. But you are not supposed to show empathy and stick to the question. Then a delirious old woman tells you about her untreated breast cancer. A grandmother talks to you about her chronic depression and how she is raising 4 adopted grandchildren with severe ADHD, has no medication and a dying husband. She just wants a psychiatrist. It is impossible to desensitize, you get angry and you want answers too, because you feel that you sure are not the answer. Every time I asked a question, I feared the response for the sake of my own sanity. How does one reconcile that?

Everyday in Louisiana there is news of more money and contracts being signed. But where is it going? It doesn't seem to be going to the people or to communities worst hit. Driving through the Ninth Ward, one sees crushed houses in the middle

of the road, graffiti on torn walls and rugged ashes of cracked ceilings lying on the ground. Signs that screech: "Please do not bulldoze!" or "We are coming back!" are a sad reminder of the hopelessness of the situation. They also warn us that the cycle of discrimination and injustice upon the racial and economic underclasses of America will continue unless something changes. Louisiana's problems seem to have been forgotten in an America that consists of the ten-second sound bite and the internet "refresh" button.

We are not doing enough. Our silence and inaction is complacency. Feel free to take action. Feel free to say something. Feel free to expect more from those that have power and let them know what you think. That freedom is all yours. As Martin Luther King once said: "A riot is the language of the unheard."

-Jed Oppenheim

Editor's Note: This article was excerpted from a letter written by the author.

Uyisenga N'Manzi: Restoring Big Dreams in Small Ways

Near the King Faisal Hospital in the Kigali neighborhood of Kacyiru sits a small house with a rusty sign that reads, "Uyisenga N'Manzi", but don't let this unimposing sign fool you. Behind the closed doors are evidence of a genocide that took the lives of



over 800,000 Rwandans and destabilized the livelihoods and health of millions, many of whom were children. At the same time, all one has to do is walk through these doors to see signs of renewed hope, as photos of children laughing and dancing plaster the walls, and where a dedicated staff works tirelessly to help survivor-orphans regain a foothold on their future and rebuild their lives.

Founded in 2002, Uyisenga N'Manzi provides economic and health services to survivor-orphans, the majority of whom have lost their parents to the 1994 genocide or HIV/AIDS. According to the International Fund for Rwanda, over 120,000 homes became child-headed households after the genocide. Thus far, Uyisenga N'Manzi has engaged approximately 3% of those in need; however, its figures are not insignificant. The organization is integrating the psychological healing of the individual child with the social and economic healing of the community, principles which are essential to peace building and reconciliation. While Jean Pierre Nkuranga, the director for Uyisenga N'Manzi, understands the need to reach out to more people, he recognizes that resources are finite and

as such must be maximized responsibly and effectively.

Like many organizations, Uyisenga N'Manzi faces challenges in raising capital to develop new programs and expand services. Monetary donations are the most sought-after and effective form of assistance because they're flexible and can make an immediate impact on a program.



As a case in point, Uyisenga N'Manzi hopes to construct new houses for subsistence farmers who live in rural villages. Each house costs approximately 1.5 million FRW (\$3,000) to build. Because of the high costs, the organization had to postpone the project. Instead, Uyisenga N'Manzi allows homeowners to apply for small grants to pay for repairs and improvements to their houses, many of which were heavily damaged during the genocide. So far, Uyisenga N'Manzi has helped rebuild twenty homes, with the bulk of funding provided by SURF, a UK-based charitable organiza-

tion that provides aid and assistance to survivors of the Rwandan genocide.

In addition to housing support services, survivors receive trauma counseling and economic assistance at Uyisenga N'Manzi. The center is staffed with a full-time clinical psychologist and supported by a professor who works on a volunteer-basis. A slightly frustrated Nkuranga added, "funding remains a formidable barrier, along with finding qualified staff." Anytime a non-profit organization can recruit and retain talented volunteers, it is increasing capacity and public support. Perhaps more

impressively than the scores of orphans who have come to the center for healing, approximately thirty-four young adults have volunteered to become counselors themselves and are now providing counseling in their communities.

For those ready to work, the organization also manages a microcredit program where residents can apply for small loans to implement agricultural and economic empowerment projects. "The program is rewarding, but the projects are difficult to

(continued on the next page)

Restoring Big Dreams in Small Ways (cont'd)

velop because people need to be trained on how to manage a project or run a business," explained Domitille Mujawase, a program coordinator for Uyisenga N'Manzi.

Despite the many daily challenges, the staff has high hopes for the orphan children of Rwanda. One day, the executive director showed me a photo of a boy named Bonfils. Bonfils lost both his parents to the genocide, leaving behind him and his sisters to care for themselves. His father was murdered and his mother died shortly after contracting HIV after she was raped. Like so many orphans in Rwanda, they turned to the streets to survive. That was until one day when Uyisenga N'Manzi found them and restored their hope and broken dreams.

Today, Bonfils is in primary school, as are his sisters who all live together in a house built by Uyisenga N'Manzi. Claudette, like so many her age, has dreams of going to college, but whose financial difficulties forbid her to do so. According to Nkuranga,

the cost to send one child is 300,000 FRW (\$600). This is for one year of college.

Clearly, Uyisenga N'Manzi cannot send every student to college, but it is sending one student at a time. In fact, that is the mission of Uyisenga N'Manzi: to restore big dreams in small ways.

-Roger Wong

Make a Difference in Rwanda!

You can best help Rwandan youth by contributing to the work of local Rwandan organizations like Uyisenga N'Manzi, the Sports and Culture for Peace Foundation, Never Again-Rwanda and many others.

Donate to the Rwandan Youth Fund www.globalyouthconnect.org/donate

100% of the proceeds of all donations to this fund will be reinvested in youth projects in Rwanda. We hope you will join us by making a donation today.

The Pillar of the World is Hope

"For every story that is written about the devastation of the Rwandan genocide, there are just as many untold stories of hope and courage.

A genocide widow who lost her husband attends a workshop which will allow her to create a small business and support her children. Orphaned youth have formed new families, living and working together in the same household. Entire communities are gathering together at gacaca in a painful process of justice and healing. High on top of a hill, rural villagers attend a literacy class in a one-room ad hoc school. Youth associations around the country organize events to engage youth in social development projects and inspire them to take action for positive change in their communities.

Each of these stories holds a common thread: hope. Hope is the motivation that keeps people going in the darkest of times. It is the bond that keeps humans connected together despite constant systematic efforts to divide us through politics, economics, and cultural differences."

Read more about Rwanda:

www.globalyouthconnect.org/pdf/rwanda_jan2006.pdf

Nepal Needs International Support to Help Build Peace

There is still hope for peace in Nepal. After days of protests amidst an escalation of fighting from the Maoist rebels, the Nepali people may have finally turned a corner in getting democracy back. Parliament has reconvened, a cease fire has been called and peace talks are on the table. But in the cycle of conflict, such opportunities to gain peace are very fragile. It is becoming ever more critical to rally behind the peaceful efforts of young Nepali peacemakers and grassroots organizations who are committed to achieving not only peace, but also long-term stability and development.

Earlier this year, GYC had planned a delegation to Nepal during which time we were to work in solidarity with just such a group of young people who are making a difference. For reasons beyond our control we had to cancel the program. While we were saddened in this delay in getting the program running, we remain 110% committed to doing what we can to be of service to Nepali youth leaders.

"The fate of the country has stalled as has everyday life. Nothing is normal, everything seems abnormal. We need moral support from everybody." (April 20th e-mail from Nepali youth organizer)

We still plan to organize a training program as soon as possible to assist the Nepali peace movement. We hope to add energy and strength to existing efforts as well as map current needs and serve as an international advocate for Nepali youth. This training program is being organized in collaboration with the Backward Society Education (BASE) and will draw on the skills and experience of our other program partners in Bosnia, Cambodia and Rwanda.



**Acting Together for
Compassion, Human Rights &
Responsibility**

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Upcoming Events & Programs

2006 & 2007

April 29 — 30	Cambodia Alumni Retreat
May 2 — June 19	Rwanda Delegation
June	"Bombunters" Screening
June 26 — July 15	Bosnia Delegation
July 7 — 11	Hudson Valley High School Workshop
July 1 — 31	Guatemala Delegation
July 16 — August 15	Cambodia Delegation
August 7 — 11	Hudson Valley High School Workshops
January 2007	Delegations to Cambodia, El Salvador & Rwanda

GYC is devoted to inspiring, supporting and connecting youth who are working to protect human rights around the world. Our mission is to build and support a community of youth who are actively promoting and protecting human rights and to inspire the next generation to work for peaceful change.

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