

Global Youth Connect

Rwanda Program Report

Human Rights Delegation for Young Leaders
June 16 - July 14, 2007

Organized in Collaboration with Never Again-Rwanda



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Rwanda in 2007

On a bright afternoon in May 2007, a group of 15 Rwandan youth gathered in a small meeting room in a hillside neighborhood in Kigali. Some were students in university, while others had just graduated from high school. One was a radio journalist; another, the leader of a network of Muslim students at the National University of Rwanda. They had gathered together to learn more about a workshop they had been selected to attend, a human rights learning community to be co-led by Global Youth Connect in partnership with Never Again - Rwanda.



Rwandan delegates getting acquainted

During the course of their meeting, these young Rwandans discussed what it means to be an “activist” and how to best prepare for the human rights workshop that would bring them together with a group of passionate youth activists from the United States. The Rwandan delegates also had a chance to discuss, quite heatedly at times, their impressions of foreigners, ranging from deep concerns about how colonialism and imperialism negatively impacted Rwanda and its citizens to an appreciation for the willingness of some outsiders to provide support for economic and social development projects, work in solidarity on peacebuilding efforts.

At the end of it all, the Rwandans were very inspired by their open dialogue with one another and decided to create a short musical and theatrical greeting for the U.S. participants, which consisted of short, humorous snippets about traditional Rwandan life.

At the same time, e-mails were flying back and forth between the U.S. delegates who were excited and nervous to be embarking on a month-long journey where they would be learning about human rights issues from their Rwandan peers and working in solidarity with local organizations. In addition to getting their shots and buying their plane tickets, they read up on current events in the Great Lakes region of Africa, watched documentaries about the Rwandan genocide and its aftermath and read academic articles, such as “The Origins of Hutu and Tutsi” written by noted scholar Mahmood Mamdani. Many participants, in conjunction with their communities and families, gathered information and materials that would be useful to organizations and colleagues in Rwanda.



US delegates to Rwanda

“The most important realization I made on this trip is that of the similarities between American and Rwandan people. We have similar thoughts and opinions and are very alike in other ways. It is sort of the realization of the unity of the human spirit.”

When they arrived in Kigali, the U.S. delegates were greeted by GYC staff and Rwandan friends, toured the neighborhood near the national stadium, visited some shops, markets, and restaurants, so as to better acclimate themselves to the environment and to spark questions in their minds for their orientation session. They got to know one another, they clarified their objectives for the delegation, and they also created a short theatrical greeting for their Rwandan counterparts who would be joining them as members of the human rights learning community workshop.

All in all, the energy of the Rwandan and U.S. delegates was positively charged for effective collaboration, sharing of knowledge, skills, experiences, honest impressions, respect and friendship.

As part of a broader initiative to train, connect and support young activists around the world interested in human rights activism, conflict transformation and peacebuilding, GYC has been organizing human rights delegations and workshops in Rwanda since January 2006. During that time, youth activists from the U.S. and Rwanda have engaged in many activities that have brought GYC to nearly every corner of the country, meeting with a wide variety of NGOs, government representatives and international institutions, providing capacity-building training in human rights activism and offering volunteer assistance to the important work of grassroots organizations.

While undoubtedly Rwanda has made much progress over the past year in terms of improving the economy and overall infrastructure, there is still a great amount of work that needs to be done to spur further economic and social development, especially in rural communities. At the same time, many people in Rwanda still have serious concerns about the state of political and civil rights, particularly in relation to freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and proper protection for witnesses in the traditional court system of *gacaca*. Nonetheless, the environment in Rwanda is welcoming to the kind of critical discussions and dialogue that result from the collaborative work of GYC and our Rwandan counterparts.

Never Again-Rwanda

We were thankful to continue our partnership with Never Again-Rwanda, a local NGO working to promote effective reconciliation in Rwanda through a variety of youth-based programs, including drama and debate clubs, workshops on Rwandan history and genocide prevention, and trainings for local youth leaders. Recently the organization's co-founder, Albert Nzamukwereka, shared with us how their work has grown in strength and momentum over the past year, in part due to the on-going

collaboration with GYC and the increased level of volunteers, exposure and support it has received as a result. As we intend that our delegation and training programs also help strengthen the capacity of local grassroots organizations to deepen and expand the reach of their programs, we are grateful to be able to contribute in whatever way possible to Never Again-Rwanda's important work. We are even more grateful that Never Again-Rwanda chooses to partner with us, greatly enhancing GYC's work in Rwanda.

For more information on Never Again-Rwanda, visit www.neveragainrwanda.org.

Human Rights Learning Community Workshop

Bringing together young activists for face-to-face dialogue and training on the critical issues of our world through interactive educational workshops called human rights learning communities is an integral part of all of GYC's work. The four day workshop organized in June 2007 was co-facilitated by GYC and Never Again-Rwanda, and built off of themes explored in similar workshops we had conducted together in Rwanda: open cross-cultural dialogue about human rights, intellectual and dramatic explorations of human rights in pre- and post-genocide Rwanda, one-on-one conversations between delegation members and action planning.



Small group work at human rights workshop

In addition to numerous interactive workshop activities which provided space for workshop participants to share their ideas and experiences with each other, we also invited leading human rights campaigners from Rwanda to join us for a panel discussion to gain their perspective on the most urgent human rights issues in Rwanda today. We were thankful to have panelists from the following Rwandan NGOs:

- Amahoro-Great Lakes
- La Ligue Rwandaise pour la Promotion et la Defense des Droits de l'homme (LIPRODHOR)
- La Ligue des Droits de la Personne dans la Region des Grands Lacs (LDGL)
- Youth Employment Services (YES)

Most members of the panel maintained that it is difficult to promote all forms of human rights in Rwanda when the country is still economically underdeveloped. As a result, they said that they felt it was necessary to focus on economic development first, after which Rwanda can shift its attention to other issues. One panelist, however, stated that freedom of speech and the press, as well as protecting witnesses who testify at the *gacaca* courts, are still great problems that must be addressed alongside economic and agricultural development, and this inspired a lengthy discussion among the workshop participants.



Discussing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the learning community workshop

"I've come to realize that many of the basic rights I take for granted as an American are some of the things people in Rwanda are struggling for."

Another highlight of the workshop experience came as participants drew off the energy and inspiration of their discussions and the personal bonds that had been developed, creating collaborative action plans to support human rights efforts in Rwanda.

Umubano Sister Schools Program: This action project focuses on educational assistance mainly for genocide survivors and street children, capitalizing on the capacity of various NGOs to implement the program. The Umubano group aims to create a University Scholars Program as well as a sponsorship program for assisting genocide orphans with basic necessities. Umubano members are getting others on their campuses involved. In the months since the workshop ended, 15 people have already pledged to sponsor an orphan and two people have committed to sponsor university educations.

Literacy Support Project: Building off the energy from last year's human rights workshop, the literacy group committed themselves to showing a short documentary that a team of GYC participants in last year's Rwanda delegation had created, in collaboration with the Rwandan NGO Fight Illiteracy Youth Organization (FIYO), to promote awareness in the US and around the world about the issue of illiteracy in Rwanda.

"We had an interesting discussion about the roots of the problem of illiteracy and I was glad to hear about the perspective and suggestions from Rwandans about how the campaign against illiteracy can combat obstacles."

Prisoner's Rights Project: Recognizing that little respect is paid to prisoner's rights in Rwanda – including providing food and clothing and the lack of good defense attorneys -- this group discussed the roots of these problems and their possible solutions. Specifically, they

devoted themselves to ensuring that prisoners have the right to a good defense. The group is focused on securing adequate defense for prisoners in the formal justice system of Rwanda, as opposed to the community-based *gacaca* system which is run without any lawyers at all. By the time the GYC delegation left Rwanda, one of the group's members had already done some research and outreach about the prisoner project, finding a university program that is already working on a similar project with which they could combine their efforts.

Mental Health in Rwanda: One of the U.S. participants' mothers is a psychiatrist who is planning to come to Rwanda to work with an organization in Butare. Hopefully, with the Faculty of Psychology at the National University of Rwanda, she will set up a small office and a training program for the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, to provide an outlet for people to talk through their thoughts and emotions. After presenting the idea to the large group, we discussed how there is a psychiatrist who will be working with Never Again - Rwanda on the same kind of program. This action group will share information to build a possible partnership and work together.

Amani Africa: This project was inspired by the GYC visit to the group called Sisters of Rwanda, which has a comprehensive and efficient program for women sex workers in Rwanda. This program will focus on outreach to support street children and vocational training. Since the workshop, several delegates have teamed up to create a U.S.-based non-profit organization called Amani Africa to support effective programs that already exist to achieve these goals in East Africa.



US and Rwandan participants

Site Visits

As the discussions at the workshop illustrated so well, there are already many projects underway in Rwanda aimed at addressing a wide range of human rights issues. Many of these projects are led by small, grassroots organizations or larger NGOs with a national scope. Most have been created by local leaders to address the problems they see in their own communities. In addition to these local efforts, there are many international NGOs with offices and projects throughout Rwanda that work hand-in-hand with local groups and often provide critical financial support to their efforts to create change.

In a world where many NGOs end up competing with each other for a finite pool of financial resources, GYC believes that it is very important for the youth participants we work with in Rwanda to consider the ways in which they can support the work of projects already underway. In addition to the collaborative action planning process undertaken during the workshop and the volunteer fieldwork projects where participants work at local NGOs, another important way in which we encourage such collaboration is by organizing site visits. These visits help forge connections between our delegation members and the work of local organizations, expose them to the different strategies being used by the organizations and provide them an opportunity to explore the myriad challenges inherent in development and human rights work.

These site visits also provide participants an opportunity to learn more about the issues through direct contact with people who are working on the ground everyday to find solutions to challenging and complex problems like poverty, HIV/AIDS, and post-genocide reconciliation and justice. The learning that comes from a visit to a genocide memorial or an exchange with the leaders of a grassroots project to empower and train women is powerful and personal in a way that reading about the same issues in an academic textbook can never be.

Millennium Village Project

Inspired and initiated by the work of Jeffrey Sachs and the Earth Institute of Columbia University, the Millennium Village Project (MVP) adopts model communities throughout the developing world to create sustainable development that ensures that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are all achieved within that community.

In Rwanda, MVP began by working in the sector of Mayange which is in the area known as Bugesera, a barren and malaria-infested area where thousands of Tutsis were forcefully relocated in the years leading up to the genocide of 1994.



Delegation member Katy Gibson and GYC staff member Laura Heaton learning to weave a basket with a cooperative in Mayange

In line with the MDGs, MVP has supported the health center with financial and human resources, distributed mosquito netting to all homes in the community, brought computers to the elementary school, initiated agricultural projects, created and/or supported craft cooperatives and alternative tourism initiatives -- all of which the GYC delegation visited within the course of 3 hours.

For more information please visit the following website:

www.earth.columbia.edu/articles/view/1897

Ntarama, Nyamata, and Murambi Genocide Memorials

By Samantha Lane and Marie Berry

At the sites of two genocide memorials at Ntarama and Nyamata, a combined number of over 15,000 people were killed. Both sites are churches, with the bones of victims on display. In each church, remnants from the fights in the form of charred walls and ceilings as well as blood stains served as a stark reminder of the violence that occurred in the now eerily silent churches. In Nyamata, several large tombs were open to the public, and the unfathomable number of coffins and bones haunted those who descended deep into the earth. As we emerged from the depths of despair, children at a neighboring school were deep in song, providing a paradoxical contrast and an emotional reminder of the innocence of the lives taken during the genocide.



Nyamata Genocide Memorial

"I think that trips to these memorials really reminded me of why I am here, why I am in human rights work, and really drove home the point of why "Never Again" really has to be never again."

Finally, a few members of the group used their free afternoon in Butare to take the 45 minute drive to Murambi, a site where between 50,000 and 60,000 people were killed in a hilltop school. Murambi is different from the other memorials because it houses 1,800 preserved bodies,

covered in limestone, on display in the classrooms.

Though we all knew what we would see at Murambi, none of us could have been prepared for how we felt when the first door was opened. In addition to the display of bodies, the memorial also shows where the mass graves were during the genocide, and how French troops set up volleyball nets over them during “Operation Turquoise.” Murambi stands out as one of the most horrifying and shocking testaments to genocide, and our discussions that followed reflected the variety of emotions experienced by the group during the entire trip.

Radio La Benevolencija

By Melissa Cushman

The radio has been an incredibly popular media tool in Rwanda for many years. Prior to and during 1994, it was used to dispense political propaganda and ethnic hatred, contributing to the mass violence which ensued during the genocide.

Seeing the need for reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda, *Radio La Benevolencija (RLB)* has developed 2 serial dramas: 1) “Search for Common Ground,” which is geared toward youth in Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and 2) “Musekeweya,” a general program for Rwandans. Both programs aim to create a space for dialogue about controversial issues facing Rwanda through fictional stories. Story topics include ethnicity, land entitlement, questioning authority, trauma and healing, as well as forgiveness. Through these dramas, Radio La Benevolencija hopes to educate Rwandans and all members of the Great Lakes region about the causes of the genocide, their repercussions, and how to prevent future violence and conflict. RLB has also created, and facilitates, listening clubs for each program to help promote discussion within communities.

During our visit to the La Benevolencija headquarters, delegates got to discuss with RLB staff the organization’s history, objectives, as well as the importance of radio as a tool to educate and promote social change. Our group

also got to listen to samples of “Musekeweya” in their editing studio and discuss the themes within it.

To learn more about the work of RLB, visit their website: www.labenevolencija.org

Sisters of Rwanda

Sisters of Rwanda (“Sisters”), is a Rwandan non-profit organization dedicated to breaking the cycle of prostitution in Rwanda by ending gender based violence and empowering women through education, career opportunities, counseling, health care, and spiritual support. The basic idea is that if one can create a better home environment as well as a better economic situation for women in Rwanda, they will not resort to prostitution as a means of making a living.

At the time of our visit, Sisters was also advocating for change at the legislative level, collecting signatures on a petition to the parliament and justice department to enact laws which would punish prostitutes’ clients. The current law punishes the sex *workers* only. According to Sisters’ executive director Jared Miller and health program and partnership coordinator Tupochele Mtila, who hosted GYC’s visit, Sisters is one of, if not *the* first organizations in Rwanda to use such a method of advocacy, and to a great extent they are gaining the attention of the Ministry of Justice in a positive way.

GYC visited Sisters’ at their headquarters in Remera, Kigali, on a sunny Wednesday morning. Known as the Treasure Center, the headquarters is a complex with a main hall used for general meetings and church services, a second hall where the women make crafts like pottery and embroidery sold by Sisters to support the women directly. In addition, there is a good-sized parking lot where we found the women getting some fresh air while stitching items to be sold to the five-star Serena Hotel in Kigali.



Learning to make pottery with the women members of Sisters of Rwanda

The GYC delegates went into the production room first, where other women were engaged in pottery-making, and before doing much else, three-quarters of the GYC delegates were down on the ground with the ladies learning and contributing to the pottery making. After cleaning-up, we sat in a circle with the women and the organization's directors to discuss Sisters, its mission, and the positive effects that it is having on the women's lives. Spirituality and God are the things that the women noted as their primary source of strength and joy in the world. The women were not all Christian. Sisters welcomes women from all spiritual backgrounds.

To provide some balance to the discussion, the GYC delegates offered testimony about programs they had heard of or had been involved with in the United States that addressed difficult social situations including domestic violence. In addition, thanks to the preparations and contributions from several GYC delegates, we were able to offer a gift to the Sisters program, a small blackboard and colored chalk. Finally, we sang a few songs together and danced in the traditional Rwandan style to the great joy of the women, who had at first been quite apprehensive about engaging with us.

According to Tupocelle, this was the first time that Sisters had received such a visit and it had been a very good experience for the women to sit, discuss and share time with us. But the women were not the only ones inspired by our visit. Most members of the GYC delegation were deeply impressed with Sisters' level of organization and potential for economic development, not to

mention with the spirit of the women in the program. Even though we had discovered Sisters at the last minute and therefore had not planned on having GYC delegates volunteer for that organization as part of their volunteer fieldwork, several delegates became involved with Sisters' work during the remainder of the delegation. For example, one participant, whose mother is a nutritionist, met with Sisters to develop/offer a nutritional curriculum based on some interactions with the women and the staff and her own background, understanding and studies. Another was very impressed with the Sisters of Rwanda model of sustainable economic empowerment and met with the Pastor subsequently to think about how to incorporate the Sisters model into his own work with street children.

For more information, check them out on the web at: www.sistersofrwanda.org

RAPSIDA

Rwandans and Americans in Partnership against HIV/AIDS

RAPSIDA is a theatre-for-development program at local Rwandan NGO co-founded by GYC's Program Director, Jesse Hawkes. RAPSIDA is dedicated to preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and reducing the stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) through the use of theatre, peer education games, and conscientious business practices that support associations of PLWHA. The GYC delegation observed a play about encouraging students and parents to talk to each other about sexual and reproductive health at ASPESKA Karenge Secondary School.

The play was followed by an interactive game of human tic-tac-toe in which provocative and challenging questions about sexual and reproductive health were posed to two teams of students (and to the audience, if the teams failed to answer correctly). As with other RAPSIDA events, the play and the peer education game were followed by a special reward meal for the actors, served by and enjoyed with an association of orphans and people living with HIV/AIDS -- the AVCAO association. Since GYC's first visit with RAPSIDA in 2006, RAPSIDA has added

new elements to the program such as the installation of bulletin boards made by People Living with HIV/AIDS at all its schools, for the anti-AIDS clubs to display information about their work and health in general. In addition, RAPSIDA is now supporting youth from the associations of People Living with HIV/AIDS with school fees to attend the schools where RAPSIDA works, enhancing the connection between the clubs and the associations. This has not come without challenges: such as the fact that some students have stigmatized and hazed the association members who are at school. But RAPSIDA and the youth clubs expected this challenge, and are responding to it with dialogue sessions and plays about reducing student to student stigma.



*Jesse Hawkes (GYC/RAPSIDA) with youth trainer
Rose Tuyishime*

For more information on RAPSIDA:

www.rapsida.blogspot.org

Uyisenga N' Manzi

By Marie Berry

Uyisenga N'manzi was established in 2002 to facilitate the economic empowerment, legal rights, psycho-social well being, education, and overall health of its over three thousand members. As children orphaned by the genocide and/or HIV/AIDS, Uyisenga's members live in child-headed households and must secure their own livelihoods. Recently, Uyisenga created the Niboyi Peace Village, where nearly 100 orphans

in 20 child-headed households live in a small community. GYC delegates visited the Peace Village one night to tour the houses, visit with the orphans, share a Fanta, and have a boisterous dance party. In addition, three GYC delegates spent nearly two weeks volunteering with Uyisenga for their field work projects. During this time, the delegates helped create Uyisenga's website, and founded two fundraising programs. One of the programs is designed to generate enough funding to enable qualified Uyisenga members to attend university, through a competitive scholarship process. The second program aims to elicit sponsors for Uyisenga members through a monthly donation to an individual orphan which covers their basic living expenses, allowing them to attend school more easily. Both of these programs are designed to empower Uyisenga N'manzi to advance its mission of providing comprehensive child care and affection to the orphans of Rwanda.

Fight Illiteracy Youth Organization (FIYO)

Having worked and visited with Fight Illiteracy Youth Organization (FIYO) on several occasions in the past, GYC was very glad to observe FIYO's operations again. We traveled to the same area where we had just been in January 2007, near Ntarama, about 45 minutes from Kigali. Here, FIYO supports and works through the association called Turwanye Ubuukeke (Let's Overcome Poverty), hosting literacy classes and activities that are combined with programs that produce immediate, tangible results in the lives of the people in the community, such as the fuel-efficient stove project and HIV Education.

The GYC delegation once again got a first-hand look at the fuel-efficient stove project and learned about how it enables young women to go to school since they do not always need to collect fire-wood. We were very glad to see that the project had progressed to a level where it could even start serving the school itself. To help the local primary school offer lunch to its students (something the government is trying to encourage so as to increase the level of primary education in the country), FIYO designed a larger version of the stove that is incredibly effective. When we visited, the school had just finished cooking a

gigantic pot of rice on one-fifth the firewood normally used. In addition to the improvement in the quality of education for the children, FIYO's efforts seem to be creating better relations between people in the community.

Never Again-Rwanda (Gisenyi)

Our local partner organization, Never Again-Rwanda, works with youth clubs all over the country. We had the opportunity to visit with two of their youth clubs at schools in the Gisenyi area, near the border of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The first school club presented their award-winning reconciliation music to the GYC delegates as well as to other students during a cool, rain-threatened afternoon at their school, which rests on a hillside of deep green grass studded with volcanic rocks. Upon arrival, the GYC delegates sat with the students out under the clouds and rain, instead of under the roof where the school had respectfully placed the visitors. If the students were to be wet, so too would the GYC delegates! Not only that, the music was so inspiring that the GYC delegation joined-in, both vocally and physically, with the chorus.



GYC delegates and youth from Never Again-Rwanda join together in a song

At the second school, we observed a drama presentation focused on how older people and parents on either side of the genocidal conflict should strive to seek forgiveness and forgive, despite the devastating and traumatic effects of the genocide. In the play, one man resisted the attempts of his wife to reconcile with the man who murdered his children in 1994. Finally, after seeing the sincerity in the other man's plea for

forgiveness, the father forgave him and the families reconciled. The presentations at both schools were followed by an interactive discussion between the GYC youth and the club youth about their methodologies and the content of their messages. GYC delegates were particularly interested to know whether reconciliation is realistic in the students' communities and schools today. The students felt optimistic about the prospects for reconciliation, noting that some people are even starting to intermarry in the region.

To learn more about Never Again-Rwanda's work: www.neveragainrwanda.org

Kigali Memorial Museum

By Samantha Lane and Marie Berry

Looking over the 25 large, metallic plates staggered in the gardens at the Kigali Memorial Museum, located in Gisozi, Kigali, it's hard to believe that over 250,000 remains lie beneath. The memorial stands as a reminder, a witness, to the horror that plagued Rwanda for 100 days in 1994. In addition to the mass graves, a museum filled with historical information about Rwanda, beginning in pre-colonial times all the way through contemporary reconciliation efforts serves to educate visitors about the unique social, political, and economic events leading up to the genocide. The museum also includes a section dedicated to documenting other genocides of the 20th century.

One of the most haunting parts of the Gisozi Memorial is the Children's Section, a long hallway where the faces of young children hover over descriptions of their names, their favorite activities and colors, their ages, and finally the brutal way they were killed. Next to the Children's Section is a room where survivors can hang pictures of their loved ones who perished in the violence. The pictures show people in happier times, at weddings, at school, with friends and family. These rooms gave faces to the numbers we've so often read about, and stood out as the most touching and difficult parts of the museum.

Gisozi Primary School

Following the visit to the Kigali memorial, the smiling faces of over two thousand children greeted us at the Gisozi Primary School. The visit was particularly inspiring when juxtaposed with the destruction and evil exhibited at the genocide memorial just down the street. The simultaneous energy and politeness of the students and teachers, the harvesting of corn and other food crops on each and every plot of land between classrooms (some of which we sampled at the end of the visit), and the glorious singing and dancing that the young students exhibited to welcome us, were tremendously inspirational.

Unfortunately, these experiences were coupled by a harsh reminder that more needs to be done by both the government and international donors to enhance the quality of basic education in Rwanda. For example, the public school children at Gisozi sit 70 students to a classroom. Even worse, they have only six pit latrines for 2,500 pupils.

In speeches and letters, but also through the plays and songs performed by the children, the administration of the school explained more about these and other problems they face and urged us to assist them. While we realized that our group had come to Rwanda to find ways to be of service, we also knew that we did not have the ability to directly assist the school with their need for more pit latrines. Nonetheless, we knew that there were small things that we could do to help out. For example, some delegation members expressed interest in creating a sister school relationship with an elementary school in the U.S. and U.S. and Rwandan workshop participants began planning out how to assist schools in Rwanda with a correspondence-based exchange program.

Darfur Peace Campaign

National University of Rwanda

Rugari Universal Family is a youth-focused peace and reconciliation association at the National University of Rwanda in Butare led by Theogene ("Totto") Niwenshuti, one of the

facilitators from the human rights learning community workshop, and a former Rwandan delegate to the June 2007 learning community.

In April 2007, Totto began holding meetings on the topic of the genocide in Darfur, hoping to create awareness and commitment among a group of university students there to plan a Peace in Darfur campaign. Already with 2,000 Rwandan Defense Forces forming the biggest contingent of the African Union Darfuri peacekeeping mission in Sudan, the goal of the university campaign would be to maximize the positive impact Rwandans at home can have in counteracting the Darfur genocide. The idea was that the university students are the policy makers of tomorrow and well respected throughout the country, and that they should be the leaders of a movement to maximize the ability of Rwanda to prevent genocide around the world, through awareness campaigns, letter writing activism, and peace marches.

By July, in consultation with Never Again - Rwanda, Rugari Universal Family had held several meetings and had a core group of youth engaging in discussions and planning the campaign, and it planned to hold its first campus wide, full-fledged awareness raising assembly at the university auditorium. Luckily, Rugari planned the assembly to be held when the GYC delegation would be in Rwanda. Even more coincidentally, several members of this summer's GYC group from the US have been and are still very active in the Save Darfur campaigns at their schools and in their communities in the US. For this reason, GYC committed to not only attending the event, but to offering a small grant of funds to support the Rugari campaign with the idea that the GYC delegates would visit with the Rugari group to exchange ideas about the Darfur crisis and action campaigns to create and support peace in Darfur.

At the fortuitous invitation of Totto, GYC engaged in a group fieldwork project linking the Save Darfur activists from within the US delegation with the Rugari students. The GYC delegates got involved in the planning of the event soon after arriving in Rwanda, meeting with Totto from Rugari, helping to develop fact

sheets and informational materials for the Peace in Darfur campaign at the National University. At the assembly, Rugari gave a multi-media presentation about the Peace in Darfur campaign they are launching at their school, including inspirational dances, speeches, and poetry -- including the passionate poem, "Never Again is now Once Again." Some of the GYC participants gave short speeches about what they have been doing at their universities.



GYC delegates Joe Stockton (left) and Melissa Cushman (right) conferencing with Totto (ctr) in preparation for the Save Darfur rally

Despite the challenges faced by Totto's group in organizing such an event -- such as the concern that focusing on Darfur could be seen as controversial and the challenge of incorporating activities that would both engage the audience while holding true to the serious and sensitive nature of the event -- we learned that after the event, and even days later, students were talking about the event and its positive significance around campus.

Gacaca

Gacaca, which literally means "on the grass" is a traditional Rwandan community-based justice process currently used as a way of speeding up the trials of genocide prisoners as well as to provide a forum for community involvement in justice for crimes committed during the genocide.

Our initial attempt to visit a *gacaca*, however, failed due to a quick re-organization of the government's calendar (a common occurrence in

Rwanda): a baby-gorilla naming ceremony at which Natalie Portman would be present was scheduled for the June 30, pushing the compulsory community work day known as "Umuganda" to the weekend of our proposed *gacaca* visit. Then, when the day of our rescheduled *gacaca* visit arrived, we were told that the main governing political party in the country, the RPF, had decided to hold its elections without any notice and that this would interfere with *gacacas* for the next few days. Finally, with the strong help of Never Again-Rwanda, we were able to secure approval and visit a *gacaca* on July 12, 2007, in the district of Karongi, in the beautiful mountains of the Western Province.

The *gacaca* was held in a place that seemed to be normally used as a cattle resting/cooling place, a small stand of eucalyptus trees on a knoll perched above the winding two lane highway to Kibuye. On trial that day were four young men, each accused of either having assisted in the persecution of people who were eventually killed, having manned roadblocks where victims were identified before being killed, having pillaged from those who were killed, or having killed victims (including a young girl) during the 1994 genocide. For each of the men, this was their third and final chance to confess to their crimes in front of *gacaca*. After calling each man to hear the accusations supplied by specific witnesses such as the woman whose child had been killed allegedly by one of the men, and also random testimony from the community members gathered on the slope, each pled for himself. Three of the accused denied that they were guilty. One, however, acknowledged that he had done wrong, confessing.

After two hours of testimony, inscription, and reading aloud from the hand-written register, the judges exited the court-area. They spent nearly an hour and a half deliberating.

While waiting for the verdict, we witnessed the three men who had maintained their innocence stroll down to a local bar and return to hang out with the local audience members present at the *gacaca*. The accused men joked about how they were going to be going to prison with a confidence that seemingly indicated that they

thought they would *not* actually be going to prison. Finally, the judges returned and quickly related that each of the three men, those who had denied any wrongdoing, was not guilty because definitive evidence was lacking and that the young man who had confessed would receive six months in prison followed by six months of community service.

It is difficult to comment on the accuracy of these verdicts. There are no lawyers involved in *gacaca*, and the only evidence presented during the trial amounted to contradictory words from an unlimited number of witnesses who were recounting events from 13 years ago. Still, the process seems an important one for the community to go through.

“I learned that reconciliation is in the eye of the beholder. I didn’t realize the extent to which reconciliation has been so successful here, nor did I realize the continued presence of deep rooted genocide ideology.”

Volunteer Fieldwork

In line with GYC’s commitment to fostering and supporting the work of grassroots organizations, the delegation members volunteered at the following local organizations over a period of two weeks.

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

AMAHORO Great Lakes: Helping children living in difficult circumstances, especially street children, child-headed families and HIV infected and affected children, demonstrating to them how to live in peace through sports.

Uyisenga N’Manzi: Uyisenga N’Manzi aims to contribute to the psychological and economic rehabilitation of unaccompanied children affected by HIV/AIDS and genocide as well as young girls

who were victims of rape or other forms of sexual violence.

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

Fight Illiteracy Youth Organization (FIYO): Devoted to ending illiteracy in Rwanda through the creation of literacy centers and complementary development activities in various communities around Rwanda.

Youth Association for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (AJIPRODHO): An association of Rwandan youth working together to promote human rights at the local and national level in Rwanda, through human rights education and other activities. For more information: www.geocities.com/jijukirwa

Association Rwandaise pour le Bien-etre Familial (ARBEF): With a major clinic in Kigali and a wide reach throughout the country, ARBEF provides family planning services, including contraceptives, counseling and HIV testing.



GYC delegates volunteering at FIYO

“The time here has showed me how much I can contribute to the promotion of human rights, and how to do so. It was a humbling experience and has made me get to know myself in another spectrum.”

While two weeks was a short amount of time, GYC delegates were able to contribute in significant ways, such as:

- Revising, writing and/or editing grant proposals and reports
- Researching and designing presentations about the organizations' work
- Establishing fundraising initiatives
- Web-site and brochure design/creation
- Creation of and leading youth focused workshops on the topics of history/reconciliation, sports for peace, women's rights and empowerment

Following the GYC delegation, several members stayed on in Rwanda to continue working with the organizations they volunteered for, and many delegates want to return in the future.

U.S. Participant Biographies

Alicia Adams

Alicia is currently enrolled at Hamline University majoring in English with a minor in social justice. In August 2000, Alicia enlisted in the United States Air Force. She was able to travel around the world and serve her country. In 2005 she enrolled in Metropolitan State University to pursue her dream of becoming a high school English teacher. She realized that she wanted to study law also and transfer to Hamline University. In the future she hopes to graduate with a Bachelor's degree and attend law school. Alicia hopes to become a policy maker to fully serve and give voices to underserved communities in the United States, and eventually help those countries outside of the U.S.

Elizabeth (Libby) Belden

Libby is currently pursing a Bachelor's Degree in political science, women's studies, and African Studies at the University of Wisconsin. She has worked with NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin as an organizing intern. Libby hopes to dedicate her life to actively fighting for equality, justice, and peace. In the future she hopes to be working for an international non-profit organization devoted to the promotion of African women's needs and propose solutions to the problems they face. After working for an NGO Libby wants to go to graduate school to get a Master's degree in public policy or public health.

Marie Berry

Marie began her college career at Claremont McKenna College in California. She was awarded a travel research fellowship at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum where she studied "The Politics Behind the Words 'Never Again'". Marie transferred to the University of Washington in her junior year to pursue a degree in international studies in greater depth at the Jackson School of International Studies. Marie currently has a fellowship in civic leadership allowing her to work at Save Darfur - Washington State. Marie hopes to graduate in June and work for a non-profit in the United States. She also hopes to go to graduate school and study cultural anthropology.

Anjali Bhatia

Anjali is currently a freshman at both Duke University and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. She founded a non-profit organization her junior year in high school called Discover Worlds. Discover Worlds shows students that despite being young they too can make a difference in the world. After graduating from Duke University Anjali wants to attain a law degree in human rights law. However, before going to law school Anjali would like to work abroad for a non-profit organization to get more experience on an international level.

Joshua Bowers

Joshua is currently attending Mount Saint Mary's University majoring in political science with a minor in non-Western studies. Joshua was able to intern for the United States Congress and shadow a lobbyist from Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina who focuses on national health care and insurance issues. After graduate school Joshua plans on working for Congress. He is interested in working as a legislative policy assistant in the areas of health care and international interests.

Melissa Cushman

Melissa is a global studies major with a minor in African Studies at the University of Washington, Bothell Campus. For the last two years, she has been working with organizations at her schools and in her community to promote the progression of human rights for various groups, including the homeless and victims of the genocide in Darfur, Sudan. In 2005, Melissa started and led a student activist club on her campus called STAND (Students Taking Action Now: Darfur). Melissa saw Darfur as a chance to avoid making the same mistakes the international community made in Rwanda: lack of action. Melissa has also been involved in the Save Darfur Coalition chapter in Seattle.

Ashley Evans

Ashley is a junior and a political science major with a concentration in international relations and a minor in sociology at Vanderbilt University. She originally comes from Huntsville, Alabama. In addition to working as the assistant to the emergency preparedness manager at Vanderbilt University, Ashley is a member of the Vanderbilt Circle K Leadership Committee, arranging multiple club service projects each semester, e.g., student mentoring and soup kitchen volunteering. She has also participated in numerous alternative spring break programs, including mentoring and working alongside at-risk and homeless teams in Chicago and doing college prep and development work in rural Arkansas. Ashley is a member of UNICEF, Habitat for Humanity, Manna Project International and Alpha Delta Pi sorority. In addition, she is a dance marathon dancer and copy editor for the Vanderbilt campus newspaper. Ashley has also been a camp counselor and drama instructor for the Girls Scouts of America and an intake coordinator for Infectious Disease Consultants in Huntsville, Alabama.

Kathryn Gibson

Kathryn received a dual degree in biology and international studies with a minor in chemistry and leadership. She is a high school teacher at Passage Charter School teaching math and science to unwed mothers. Kathryn has studied abroad in India, New Zealand and Denmark. In the future she hopes to work in community health and development to continue serving humanity.

Branton Kunz

Branton is a senior at the University of Wisconsin - Madison majoring in geography. He is co-president of a Darfur advocacy group called Action in Sudan. He is also a divestment director for the Darfur Action Coalition of Wisconsin. Branton hopes to promote international and human rights in schools and colleges. In the future Branton sees himself working in human rights, he is also considering law school to study international and humanitarian law.

Samantha Lane

Samantha is currently in her fourth year of graduate school at the University of California - Irvine studying criminology, law & society. She received her Bachelor's degree in psychology with an English minor from the University of California in 2001. Samantha is presently working as a volunteer at the local rape crisis counseling center. In the future Samantha hopes to finish her PhD on women survivors of the Rwandan genocide and learn more about women's issues and international human rights. She hopes to have a position in a research institution—academic, governmental or non-governmental—that will allow her to continue to

research issues relating to Rwanda, human rights and the law.

Edina Strikovic

Edina is currently a student at Saint Louis University studying international studies, political science, psychology and German. She also volunteers at the Center for Survivors of Torture and War Trauma. Edina was born in Bosnia but moved to Germany due to the outbreak of the war and genocide. After nine years she moved to the United States. Edina hopes to graduate with honors next year, and then get an internship at a human rights organization. Edina looks forward to studying international human rights law at a graduate school and working for a human rights organization during her career.

Joe Stockton

Joe is currently a student at the University of Washington majoring in political science. Last year Joe did an internship in political action and public policy advocacy with Save Darfur. His focus was on raising awareness, organizing rallies, and lobbying political officials. After graduating he would like to go to law school and become an international lawyer. Joe would like to dedicate part of his career to shutting down sweatshops, implementing universal workers' rights, and putting an end to all other forms of human rights violations.

Ryan Trout

Ryan is currently a senior at Mount St. Mary's University majoring in political science. Putting an end to social injustice and standing up against human rights violations is Ryan's calling in life. In the future he would like to run for public office on a platform of equality, compassion, and peace. He hopes to go to graduate school and study conflict resolution, international law, and economic development.

Rwandan Participant Biographies

Marie Alice Ingabire

Marie Alice is currently the 'Local Officer on Reproductive Health Including AIDS' for the Standing Committee on Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS (SCORA) and the Medical Students Association of Rwanda (MEDSAR) at the National University of Rwanda. Her responsibilities include project management of the HIV and Sexual Education Project. The mission of these organizations are to promote behaviour change, to fight against stigma amongst young people with regard to these issues and to promote acceptance of people living with HIV/AIDS in society. On a daily basis Maria Alice works with young girls who are living with HIV/AIDS and whom have experienced rape or are highly vulnerable to it. She hopes to learn effective strategies for promoting human rights so she

can transfer this knowledge back to the target group she works with.

Gyslaine Uwitinze

Gyslaine is currently pursuing a degree in law from Kigali Independent University. She spent over a year volunteering for the organization ‘Rwandans and Americans in Partnership’ (RAP) as a ‘Residence Manager.’ One of RAP’s main goals is to connect American and Rwandans students interactively on issues related to HIV/AIDS. In this, Gyslaine oversaw various exchanges that took places and managed the learning centre as needed. She now works as an interpreter for foreigners in Rwanda. As a law student she is particularly interested in using what she learns about human rights from this workshop back in her studies and then, eventually, to influence positive change in Rwandan society—making sure that the rights of all are respected.

Gisele Nyampinga

Gisele is currently between secondary school and studies at the National University of Rwanda. Her area of focus as a high school student was the arts, but she intends to pursue a degree in journalism at university. She feels that due to the genocide in Rwanda, being a human rights advocate and activist in Rwanda must be part of her future ambitions. She hopes to travel and learn about the differences of cultures throughout the world in order to promote understanding of human rights in her society and beyond. Having spent part of her youth in Canada and learning from and about the people there, Gisele feels it is her responsibility to spread the very important messages of human rights.

Rosette Barakagwira

Rosette is a member of ‘Club Itetero’ at Kigali Independent University. She is the president of Club Itetero—whose mission is to strengthen unity and reconciliation among Rwandans as a way of solving conflicts. At university Rosette is studying Administrative Science and in the future she hopes to promote human rights by promoting advocacy in the youth and, thus, transforming Rwandan society into a better place to live. She hopes this workshop will empower her capacity to achieve her hopes.

Susan Mutoni

Susan is currently a student at Kigali Institute of Management where she studies financial management and is the president of the ‘Never Again Rwanda’ club. In her spare time she is also the Vice-President of ‘Global Trustees for Unity and Peace Volunteers’ (GTUPV) a new youth-led and oriented organization meant to promote the spirit of volunteerism and development activities in Rwanda. She oversees GPUTV and is in charge of all internal affairs. She is a

confident and ‘purpose-driven’ leader who hopes to acquire further leadership skills in the workshop and use the knowledge to ensure a bright future for the Rwandan people.

Veronica Uwamariya Kanimba

Veronica is currently a student at the National University of Rwanda where she is studying business in the department of management. She is a committee adviser to the Rwandan United Nations Association (RUNA) at Butare—where the university is located. She is also an active member of the University Women’s Student Association (UWSA). Eventually, she would like to do a masters in public administration because she feels it will better prepare her to work with people from difference cultures. She hopes to take what she learns from this workshop and use it back in the associations she is involved in and then in Rwandan society.

Abdallah J. Nepo Utumatiwshima

Abdallah recently served as the president of the Muslim Community of National University of Rwanda (CEM/NUR). Their objective is to bring and maintain unity between Muslim students, participate in university life and to promote reconciliation and conflict resolution in Muslim communities and Rwandan society. Abdallah is also a 5th year medical student and a volunteer trainer of family planning for the RwanDAnmark project at NUR. This role brought him to Copenhagen University in 2006 to be trained in international health and project management. Abdallah believes that unity and reconciliation is especially important for the Muslim community in Rwanda—as they were considered to be oppressed long before the genocide. Abdallah hopes the workshop reveals how the rights of all can be promoted and advocated, regardless of religion or ethnicity, and how this knowledge can be applied in Africa and Rwanda, in Islam and in medicine.

Deogtatis Komezusenge

Deogtatis is currently in the faculty of law, while also studying business and accounting, at the National University of Rwanda. He is a member of ‘Groupe Universitaire de la Non Violence Active’ (GUNVA) where his responsibilities include sensitizing communities about peacebuilding and active non-violence—which are the aims of the organization. He is a former advisor for ‘Voices of Children.’ Deogtatis would like to be a specialist and advocate of human rights and would like to spread the message throughout Rwandan and the world. He will use the knowledge gained from the workshop to further disseminate non-violent and peacebuilding activism.

Jean D'Amour Musoni

Jean D'Amour is a member of 'Uyisenga N'Manzi' whose mission is to help genocide and AIDS orphans with their everyday life in Rwanda. Jean D'Amour is the head of an Orphan-Headed Household where he is responsible for five 'sibling' orphans and himself. Through it all, he has begun studying at Kigali Independent University in the subject of sociology. He has come into contact with GYC youth before and hopes that by participating in this workshop he will learn how to build a peaceful country and world. He believes it is the responsibility of youth to fight for human rights and sees himself as taking a lead role in this fight. He has begun teaching youth in his community about their rights and hopes he can further this skill and use it more in the future.

Jules Nahimana

Jules works for the Rwandan human rights umbrella organization CLADHO as their 'HIV/AIDS Program Manager.' He is responsible for working closely with all partners on HIV/AIDS and human rights issues, as well as providing program support to them. CLADHO's mission is to 'protect, defend and promote human rights.' He has a degree in Educational Psychology from Adventist University of Central Africa and is currently a fellow in the Rwanda HIV/AIDS Public Interest Fellowship Program supported by Tulane University and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Jules believes this workshop will further enhance his knowledge and skills with regard to human rights and he will be able to use what he learns in his profession and at CLADHO.

Emmanuel Munyarukumbuzi

Manou, who studies communications at the National University of Rwanda, is currently a dancer for 'Amizero Contemporary Dance Company.' The company combines entertainment and education and Manou is an interpreter of choreography. He also works as a producer at Television-Rwanda—packaging shows, writing scripts, editing and improving shows. As an actor and dancer, Manou promotes conflict resolution, poverty reduction and other humanitarian issues by creative and innovative means. He is multi-lingual and plans on creating Entertainment-Education Projects, especially around health issues. He sees the workshop as an opportunity to share ideas across cultures and to learn new and effective strategies for promoting human rights and collaborative development. Manou believes his background in arts and communication will allow him to implement large-skill advocacy campaigns to make Rwandan society better and better educated. He is also active with the campus anti-genocide in Darfur action planning committee that wants to organize a large-scale action to end the genocide.

Benon Kalisa

Benon is a 1st year student at Kigali Institute of Management. He is also a member and founder of 2 Never Again Rwanda (NAR) clubs: Kigali Institute Management and Kicukiro Youth Association. He is NAR's Youth Club Outreach Coordinator and his responsibilities include promoting NAR and their aims and objectives in schools around Rwanda. He creates new clubs and coordinates among existing clubs. NAR promotes human rights and peacebuilding among Rwandan youth through cultural or athletic performance, critical thinking engagement and connectivity with youth in, or from, other parts of the world. Benon likes bringing youth of different backgrounds together to achieve human rights and peaceful goals in Rwandan and global society. He hopes to learn more about human rights from the workshop and how to use what he learns back in NAR youth clubs. Benon's brother has also recently returned from a tour in Darfur as an African Union Peacekeeper and Benon hopes to integrate that struggle into his work in Rwanda.

Amina Ntumurize

Amina is currently the 'Theatre/Drama Outreach Coordinator' for Never Again Rwanda. Her responsibility is to promote the use of theatre/drama among Rwandan youth in order to build a peaceful society that recognizes and practices human rights and equality. She also uses theatre/drama to advocate for unity and reconciliation in Rwanda. Amina does the same work for Health Development International, training others in theatre/drama as an advocacy and awareness-building tool. At her secondary school, she was the person in charge of gender promotion. Through the workshop she hopes to further learn how to end human rights violations while promoting human rights in general. After human rights for all has been achieved, Amina plans on moving on to animal rights.

Gabriel Niyonzima

Gabriel is in his 4th year of management studies at UNILAK University in Kigali. He serves as the chief editor at 'Umucyo Community Radio' where he supervises the fieldwork of journalists and organizes community mobilization programmes; he edits news stories and conducts studio debates. Umucyo aims to highlight the needs of the Rwandan community with regard to poverty, illiteracy and conflict. Much of his work takes him to the grassroots and rural areas of Rwanda in order to assess situations where human rights need to be promoted and violations need to be alleviated. He hopes that through the use of radio and other media Rwanda will be a peaceful country where rights are respected and youth are able to positively resolve conflicts.

Julliet Busingye

Julliet is currently a student at Kigali Institute of Science and Technology studying Computer Science. Her studies are sponsored by 'Orphans of Rwanda, Incorporated' (ORI) of which she is a member. ORI helps find funding for Rwandan orphans for their university studies. Julliet attends many ORI sponsored programs such as workshops and meetings much like this workshop. She attended FAWE girls school and has been a part of a 'trauma healing' workshop in Kigali, as well as a 'speak out club' for girls. Julliet plans to use the knowledge and skills learned at this workshop about human rights in her desired future profession as a computer engineer. When finished with her studies she plans on building an orphanage for youth like herself and to use the orphanage as a place to promote and protect human rights. She is determined to know the root causes of genocide and how to put in practice 'Never Again.'

Staff Biographies

Jesse Hawkes

*Rwanda Program Director
Global Youth Connect*

Jesse is a social activist, professional actor and youth development worker currently living and working in Kigali, Rwanda. In addition to serving as GYC's Program Director for Rwanda, Jesse works as program director for RAPSIDA, an HIV/AIDS prevention program of Rwandans and Americans in Partnership, since 2003 (www.rapsida.blogspot.com). His work at RAPSIDA has included developing and managing a creative, engaging HIV prevention program for six Rwandan high schools utilizing a combination of innovative theatre methods, peer education, and outreach activities. He has also written episodes of Ishuti Solange for Population Services International (PSI-Rwanda), a popular radio drama series on HIV/AIDS and other public health concerns. In collaboration with the Rwandan Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport, Jesse performed at the 10th memorial service of the 1994 genocide at Amahoro Stadium, Kigali. As a founding member, assistant program director and chair of the Board of Directors for Centers for Social Responsibility, Jesse led outreach campaigns to schools for the Rwanda By Invitation program, chaired the Sister Schools program where he led secondary school students on a trip to Rwanda, and designed and delivered presentations on Rwandan history and culture to local high schools in Vermont. He also served as a visiting artist at the Community Arts Project in Cape Town, South Africa where he directed, wrote and facilitated a community development theatre project in collaboration with the South African government, township youth and South African artists. As an educational consultant for Parents, Teachers and Students for Social Responsibility, an

organization implementing educational programs and projects designed to empower young people with the knowledge and attitudes needed to become proactive citizens for social justice, he led a group of high school youth from the US on a visit to Haiti. Jesse graduated cum laude from Harvard University in 1999 with a bachelor's degree in history.

Joseph Ryarasa Nkurunziza

*Chairperson
Never Again-Rwanda*

Joseph completed his studies at the Medical School in 2005 at the National University of Rwanda and is currently working with the Millennium Villages project as a Program Implementer and planner in the health sector. He is involved with two organizations, Health Development Initiative as the vice chairperson and Never Again-Rwanda as the chairperson. He was the president of the Medical Students Association of Rwanda (Medsar) from 2004-2005 and through this position he initiated numerous community health based projects in the Huye District, southern province of Rwanda, including an HIV/AIDS sensitization project in the Mugombwa Districts and various projects providing mothers with pre-natal consultations and family planning education. Between the years of 2001-2003, he was involved in the University Women Students Association and the Students Guild Council of the National University of Rwanda, where he was the Assistant Guild Minister of Gender and acted as a representative in the faculty council. He has also played a key organizational role in various national and international conferences, workshops, and public lectures, such as the Rwanda Forum in London in March 2004 and an Interuniversity Workshop on Gender Promotion at Kigali Institute of Science and Technology. He has attended numerous events as well including a sexual education conference in Birmingham, UK, Overseas Volunteers conference at Bristol University (UK) the International Federation of the Medical Students Associations' meetings in Turkey and Egypt, a sexual, reproductive health & development workshop in Zambia, African Medical training Congress in Ghana, and many other seminars on Rwandan politics, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and gender awareness, in 2005 Nov he organized a training for trainer for peer Educators in Reproductive Health. He is the chairperson of Never Again Rwanda. He has organized youth debates and forums among the Rwandan youth, facilitated trainings on youth human rights learning communities, organized a global youth genocide prevention forum in Kigali, initiated a youth project entitled mobilizing of youth to overcome social prejudices and manipulations in the former Kibuye province (Rwanda), initiated a project in the western province entitled engaging youth in the improving their social economical conditions, organized a workshop on unity and reconciliation as a pillar to development and his extra-curricular activities

include reading, debating, and studying international politics and public relations. He plans to be engaged in peace building, conflict management and also treating people with tropical diseases.

Laura Heaton

Special Project Assistant, Rwanda

Global Youth Connect

Laura Heaton is an international intelligence correspondent at United Press International in Washington D.C. Previously, she was a multi-media assistant at Agence France-Presse in Washington, D.C. Laura received a BA in international relations from Connecticut College in 2005, where she conducted an independent study on the effects of human rights on state sovereignty and international institutions. During her undergraduate studies, Laura worked as a research assistant, primarily focusing on women's movements and the democratization of Africa. She studied abroad in Hanoi and Paris, and spent a summer working in Madagascar, where she assisted with various children's rights projects for the human rights organization "Enfants du Monde." During her last year of college, Laura co-founded and co-chaired the Connecticut College chapter of STAND (Students Taking Action Now: Darfur), and she continues to be involved in Darfur advocacy. Through her travels and studies, Laura has gained proficiency in French.

Pascal (Pasi) Ruberwa

Local Project Coordinator

Global Youth Connect

Pasi is a high school graduate who is currently taking business Management courses at Kigali Institute of Management (KIM). He first became connected with Global Youth Connect through Jesse Hawkes, GYC's Rwanda Program Director. Jesse first met Pasi through his work with RAPSIDA in a village community called Ndera outside of Kigali where Pasi lives with his mother and his brother Eddy. Pasi is involved with his reconciliation and anti-AIDS youth clubs in his home area and he has recently initiated a Never Again club at KIM.