



GYCO News

Edition 3, April 2021



New cooperations for GYCO to boost our network

The GYCO team in Gulu City, Northern Uganda and I ushered in 2021 when the world was still battling the COVID 19 pandemic, moreover we were in the middle of an election period in Uganda, where most citizens were uncertain about security and their future, however all went well and we were reminded to cultivate and cherish the spirit of gratitude, for there are so many small things that took place in 2020 that brought us joy and made our efforts worthy.

We went into partnerships with other organizations such as, the War Victims and Children Networking initiative, widening our outreach, we saw our GGSC – the GYCO Girls Soccer Club, continue to win various matches and attract sponsors. We were also able to welcome on board a new member to the GYCO team Austria, Dr. Ruby Sircar who joined us in her capacity as Lead Artistic Research person.

Most importantly, I would like to give my deepest appreciation to all the GYCO staff, and board members in Uganda, Austria and Switzerland for their undying commitment in seeing that we continue to operate at all costs, and this was made possible by the great generosity and kindness from our wonderful sponsors and supporters words cannot describe how grateful we are.

Thank you, thank you, thank you and we look forward to an even more prosperous 2021.

I want to give my deepest appreciation to the GYCO Team



New Board member Dr. Ruby Sircar

GYCO is pleased to announce the addition of Dr. Ruby Sircar to the Board in Austria. Ruby will work in the art department as Lead Research Director for the Art and Education Center. Ruby is an artist and cultural producer, she holds a PhD in Post-Colonial and Contemporary Art Studies, teaches at the Fine Arts of Vienna (AT) and was a Jan van Eyck Academie Maastricht Research Fellow. Her work focuses on politics of migration and popular culture.

1. Why did you decide to join GYCO to support the organization?

Do you know what it means to bubble with joy? When I first met Louise Deininger during her Earth and Soil Performance this is exactly what it felt like. All of us who had the privilege to witness this performance were deeply touched. This was the moment I wanted to work with her. The performance took place almost a decade ago, and now I am in the happy position to actually participate in an institution which she initiated: GYCO. Since almost five years Louise made it the task closest to her heart to communicate GYCO along and through her art. Whenever she presented her artwork GYCO was in it. She created a whole universe of thought and particularly love.

We have the chance to change the world: empower to self-care and self-determination in its various regions

2. Where do you see the main focus in your work for GYCO?

The chance of now working with GYCO is a possibility to return some of these happy feelings which Louise's artwork and her way of caring for others has created inside of me. We have not only been working together at the Academy of Fine Arts, but also exchanged interests at the Austrian Women Association for the Arts which Louise is currently chairing. We also share the interest in promoting de-colonial issues and discussing social privileges and how to act as a gate opener instead of a gate keeper in the arts and knowledge production. Working together on these issues also means sharing our interest in feminist matters which we understand as political care policies which we as artists convey through our common work: writing, teaching and drawing together.

3. Now how can this mutual interest in content and artistic formats be translated into an organizational structure such as the one found at GYCO?

The answer is a very simple one: support, advertise the cause and exchange knowledge. For me this also means taking it back to accepting and promoting forms of teaching and content conveyance which are locally developed and empower the people engaged to right wrongs with tools developed by themselves and not by and through others. We have the chance to change the world: empower to self-care and self-determination in its various regions now. Or as Achille Mbembe calls it - we live in a time of »planetary entanglement«. We can use the confusion and the changes that come with it to create a whole society which heals and furthers. And I am happy to be part of that with GYCO.



Change the world with one conversation at a time

Coaching is an essential part of GYCO's program. Last year, the first 11 participants in the Erickson Coaching International course completed "The Art and Science of Coaching" and were certified by Erickson. Carmel Lee Paul, Lead Coach for GYCO, organized the program for GYCO and was able to recruit coaching colleagues from all over Europe to attend the trainings pro bono. Now she spoke with Miglena Doneva-Doncheff, President of the Austrian Chapter of the International Coaching Federation (ICF), Erickson Partner Austria and Erickson Facilitator for the Erickson Coaching Training "The Art and Science of Coaching", for "Parent as Coach" and "High Performance Team Coaching", who had facilitated Module 1 and 2 in Uganda in December 2019.

Uganda and especially GYCO, what does it mean to you and what was your experience working with GYCO in Uganda?

I fell in love with GYCO, the GYCO staff and the country. I am impressed by the engagement and motivation of the GYCO staff members to support GYCO's mission to "create a mind shift in the post-war youth of Northern Uganda". I have seen so much passion and creativity in the participants, everyone is striving to shape their own lives in the best way possible.

As ICF President Chapter Austria you and your board colleagues have organised an online conference "leadership 4.0" in February, could you tell us about this?

The conference was based on our believe due to scientific research and experience that the leaders of the future need different skills and knowledge to be effective and thus we organized related to these needed competencies.

ICF Austria invited the Erickson certified coaches to participate to this conference for free, what made you do this? How come you and your board members made this possible?

We fully believe in GYCO's mission and thus continue to accompany the GYCO coaches in their development in order to enable them to be even more efficient and effective in following their mission and goals supporting the North-Ugandan youth.

To "create a mind shift in the post-war youth of Northern Uganda" matches Erickson International's mission to "change the world with one conversation at a time". These two principles combine ICF and GYCO in such a wonderful way.

What are the next steps for the GYCO Erickson Coaches to become ICF Certified Coaches?

Some of the certified GYCO coaches can participate in the Coaching Mastery program. This is the next step towards ICF certification. Therefore the ICF offers the special Erickson Coach, Carla Benedetti, for group mentoring sessions. This is possible because Carla as well as Erickson Austria and you, Carmel Lee, and Dieter Volc funding it.



Miglena Doneva-Doncheff in a dress designed by Sharon Anena, the Administration Director of GYCO

Video Interview with Miglena Doneva-Doncheff



We fully believe in
GYCO's mission



Bringing back the dreams

Thomas Vava has the mission to foster peace through creativity and inspire as many people as possible. Through the traumas experienced after the genocide and further internal conflicts, many young people remained helpless, not being able to process what had happened or how to cope with the great loss that their region was subjected to. Through the psychological support brought to the region, many youngsters were helped to move on in life and process the past. Thomas is a prime example: He did not speak until he turned into a grown-up.

How did you start with your artwork?

Initially, I was doing artwork just to earn a living, mostly to feed myself by making paintings that appeal to tourists. I didn't study art or have any art education. GYCO gave me the opportunity to develop myself further. When I joined GYCO Academy, I defined my goals and got an accountability partner, who enabled me to stay focused. Through mentoring from international coaches and art experts at GYCO Academy, I was able to participate in the YAA Young Art Auction in Vienna, Austria, where I was able to generate clients including customers in the United Kingdom and beyond. Furthermore, GYCO Academy provides me with a platform where I can carry out community outreach programs, where I am able to meet and inspire other youth from the post-war region of Northern Uganda, and who are passionate about art. Many people lost their dreams during the times of war – I'd like to bring back the dreams.

GYCO provides me with a platform where I can inspire the Youth

What are your further plans?

Now I have the opportunity to apply for the school of fine arts in Vienna through a scholarship: I was awarded with the Walter Koschatzky Art Prize scholarship from the Rotary Club Wien Albertina and will go to Austria as soon travel is possible.



One of his latest art works:
(exhibited in the BVLGARI boutique
in Zurich in November 2020)





With more self-esteem to a better life

Otim Francis is a program director at GYCO Academy. He is now also the City Division Counselor of Gulu.

What does GYCO mean to you?

Through GYCO, I have learned to set clear goals and follow through with them.

I have already been able to achieve many of the goals I set myself last year. One big one: Now I am also City Division Counselor for the Gulu district and can contribute to the development of our region.

What are your goals at GYCO?

First and foremost, to support the youth - many of the young people here did not go to school and do not have much confidence in themselves. These young people should gain more self-esteem through our trainings - a change in their attitude and mindset can help them take control of their lives. In the long term, we would also like to reach out to young people in other districts in the civil war-torn region of Northern Uganda.



New cooperation to strengthen the network

GYCO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with War Victims and Children Networking (WVCN) to work together as partners and achieve the common goal of empowering the Youth of Northern Uganda who have been directly and indirectly affected by the aftermath of war. Together we can!



**Edward Otika, Country Director GYCO and Stella Lanam
Executive Director of WVCN.**



**The GYCO girls' football club offers young women a platform to
develop themselves and also to have fun in the sport.**



20 Euros for an empowered Youth

We thank all our donators for your great support –with your help GYCO can conduct development programs especially for young women and for the youth in Gulu, North-Uganda. With 20 Euros monthly you can help us to finance the operational costs for the Youth Center in Gulu.

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